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AN ESSAY IN DISCOVERY
CO-ORDINATING
SCIENTIFIC, PSYCHICAL, AND BIBLICAL RESEARCH

BURNETT H. STREETER
A. CLUTTON-BROCK C. W. EMMET J. A. HADFIELD
THE AUTHOR OF 'PRO CHRISTO ET ECCLESIA'

And though thy soul sail leagues and leagues beyond—
Still, leagues beyond those leagues, there is more sea.

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1930

V. THE BIBLE AND HELL

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By the Rev. C. W. Emmet, B.D., *Vicar of West Hendred, Berks, Author of* '*The Eschatological Question in the Gospels*,' '*The Epistle to the Galatians*' (*Readers' Commentary*), '*The Third Book of Maccabees*' (*Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, ed. by Charles*), '*The Fourth Book of Maccabees*' (*S.P.C.K. translations of early documents*), *etc.* 167

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INTRODUCTION

Man's life is like a Sparrow, mighty King!
That—while at banquet with your chiefs you sit
Housed near a blazing fire—is seen to flit
Safe from the wintry tempest. Fluttering,
Here did it enter; there, on hasty wing,
Flies out, and passes on from cold to cold;
But whence it came we know not, nor behold
Whither it goes. Even such, that Transient Thing
The Human Soul. . . .

This mystery if the Stranger can reveal,
His be a welcome cordially bestowed!

Because they believed the Roman Stranger *could* reveal the mystery of the After-life our Saxon fathers accepted Christianity. May we believe that any teacher, Christian or other, can reveal that mystery to us to-day? . . . That is a question which tens of thousands are asking now.

That there is a life beyond the grave, many, perhaps, the majority, still believe; but it is a belief resting mainly upon instinct or upon a tradition the trustworthiness of which they are increasingly aware is being questioned from many sides.

The growth alike of knowledge and of moral insight has gradually made more and more untenable the conventional pictures of Heaven and Hell which seem to have satisfied, or at least to have been accepted by, most men well on into the nineteenth

that lies behind the world of sight and touch. "There are branches of knowledge with respect to which the law of the human mind is progress. . . . But with theology the case is very different. . . . A Christian of the fifth century with a Bible is neither better nor worse situated than a Christian of the nineteenth with a Bible, candour and natural acuteness being, of course, supposed equal."

But things have changed since Macaulay wrote. Science is every day making new discoveries which bear on the relation of the body and the soul. Psychical Research, if it has added little to our knowledge of another life, has at least thrown startling light on the nature of that mind whose survival is in question; and Philosophy has not been idle. The application to Theology of the doctrine of Evolution and of the results of Psychology and of the Science of Comparative Religions has given a new meaning to the word Revelation; while, in the light of lately discovered documents and new methods of study, the New Testament speaks with another voice. It is not the lack of new knowledge but the difficulty of co-ordinating it which holds us back; for no one person can have really first-hand knowledge of all the various departments of thought concerned.

Discovery comes whenever trains of thought or pieces of information originally separate are seen to illuminate and explain each other. But, when the things requiring to be brought together exist in different minds, this fusion is made harder or easier in exact proportion to the degree of sympathy and the range of contact between those minds. Hence, though

much may be accomplished by the reading of books or articles by workers in different departments, conditions become more favourable if this can be supplemented by the living contact of mind with mind. The maximum possibilities of such fusion of different strains is reached where there is personal as well as intellectual understanding, and where there is an overmastering passion for Truth which makes each willing to put all he has into the common stock, to hold back no half-formed thought as foolish or immature, to secrete no bright idea as private property, and to defend no position once taken up merely from respect to interest or conservatism or from personal *amour propre*. Intellectual co-operation only achieves its greatest possibilities where its basis is enthusiasm for a common cause and personal friendship; and experience shows that the intellectual activity and receptivity of each is raised to the highest pitch when that fellowship is not in work alone and in discussion, but in jest and prayer as well—for humour and common devotion, when both are quite spontaneous, are, though in very different ways, the greatest solvents of egotism and a well-spring of fellowship and mutual understanding. Such fellowship and co-operation is not always an easy thing to compass, but when it exists persons of quite modest gifts and moderate experience can do, relatively to their capacity, great things.

The last ten years have seen a widespread recognition of the value of this group method of attacking current problems, practical as well as intellectual. The volumes *Foundations* and *Concerning Prayer* were an attempt to

apply it to some urgent questions of Religion; and, whatever may be thought of these works, such merits as they have are mainly due to this method of approach. The experience gained in the preparation of these books, particularly the latter, suggested the hope that, by the application of the same method, light might be gained on the pressing question of the Future Life.

Several whose names do not appear on the title-page of this book took part in one or more of the preliminary conferences held at Cumnor, and contributed memoranda on special points. And though none of them are in any way responsible for the opinions expressed in any of the Essays, the authors feel bound to acknowledge the value of their participation in the conferences by the mention of their names: Dr. E. W. Barnes, Master of the Temple; the Rev. W. S. Bradley, Tutor of Mansfield College; the Rev. C. H. S. Matthews, Vicar of St. Peter's, Thanet; Captain W. H. Moberly, D.S.O., Fellow of Lincoln College; and lastly, Miss M. S. Earp, who, besides being present at all the conferences, has given invaluable help in connection with the MSS. and proofs. An acknowledgment is also due to Miss M. E. Campbell for the compilation of the Index.

In addition to the discussions, both in this larger group and among themselves, individual contributors have had the advantage of being able to consult other friends who had special knowledge on particular points. By this method it has been possible to focus upon the subjects treated a range of thought, experience, and expert knowledge which no one person could have

commanded alone. As a result of thorough discussion a degree of unity and unanimity has been arrived at which, in view of the very various tastes, training, and experience of the authors, is remarkable, and which encourages them to believe that the conclusions reached are really sound. Sometimes, of course, an Essay treats of subjects of which its author has himself made a special study, but about which some or all of the other contributors feel that they are not competent to speak with authority; and things are sometimes said by one writer which would have been put with a different kind of emphasis by another. Subject, however, to these reservations, the book is put forward on the corporate responsibility of all the contributors; it presents a connected train of thought and a definite and coherent point of view, and, though each Essay is complete in itself, it will gain by being read in the order and context in which it stands.

In the first two Essays and the first section of the third the attempt is made to set out in a logical sequence the main arguments for the belief in personal Immortality. The rest of Essay III. and Essays IV. to VI. deal with the nature of the after-life, and discuss the meaning and value for modern thought of conceptions like Resurrection, Judgment, Heaven and Hell. Essays VII. and VIII. endeavour to estimate judicially the elements of truth and error in Spiritualism and in the doctrine of Reincarnation, more especially in relation to the claims made on its behalf by modern Theosophy. Essay IX. forms, as it were, an Epilogue to the whole collection.

SYNOPSIS

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Agnosticism, *i.e.* complete suspense of judgment about a future life is really impossible 3

One main cause of disbelief in it is the passion for disinterestedness. In this case the disbelief is not so complete as it supposes. It is moral rather than intellectual 3

Another cause is the reaction against current presentations of the belief. If our beliefs fail to express our values, we reject them. Our effort is to conceive reality in terms of our values. The conflict between beliefs and values is most acute in the matter of a future life 5

There is a disinterested desire to believe in a future life in so far as we wish to prove the justice of the universe. But the consequent effort to attain certainty leads us into an unjust conception. So we lose certainty 6

The belief in Hell and its revenge on those who hold it. The natural reaction and the despair of all belief. The suspicion of any belief in a future life as tainted with egotism. So agnosticism seems safer and more moral 9

But there is always a counter-reaction. The revolt against mechanical conceptions of life inevitable. The belief in a future life not obsolete but always growing. Only the expression of it becomes obsolete. Men believe more and more in a future state. But they have to earn their belief, and it is always being destroyed by unearned certainties. It can be earned only by the practice of the principles of Christianity 10

I

PRESUPPOSITIONS AND PREJUDGMENTS

In this paper I propose to discuss, not the reasons men give for their belief or disbelief in a future life, but deeper, unconscious causes, which are peculiarly powerful in this case because there is so little to argue about. The unseen world, if there is one, *is* unseen; and we know no facts about it as we know facts about this world. Therefore there are many who say they are agnostics about it; but it is impossible to be really an agnostic about the question of a future life. If this life is a preparation for another, it cannot be the same for us as if it ended with death; hence we cannot escape from a working hypothesis that it does or does not end with death, which must, one would suppose, affect our conduct. It may be, of course, that all our working hypotheses, all our thoughts, are merely part of a mechanism and have nothing to do with our conduct, which is another part of the mechanism of life. But we must and do always dismiss that possibility when we think; for it makes all thinking and all theories futile, including itself.

It is, however, a strange fact that unbelievers in a future life do not greatly differ in conduct or in values from believers. They do not say, "Let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die." They believe just as firmly in absolute values, in truth, in righteousness, and in beauty, as the man who

could draw you a map of heaven; indeed they often seem to believe more firmly in them, for it is possible to believe in a future life and to have no absolute values at all, to see every good action merely as an investment. But the man who refuses to believe in a future life, if he acts rightly, must do so for the sake of doing so; righteousness must have an absolute value for him indeed. And here, perhaps, we may find the cause of much avowed disbelief. It is really faith, a faith in absolute values which refuses the support and comfort of any dogma. It maintains that man has his values and that it is his duty to obey them without hope of reward, without even seeking for a proof that they belong to the order of the universe, that they are shared by anything except man; that man must be good without postulating a God to approve of his goodness, or a universe in which that goodness has any significance or lasting effect. This refusal to believe in a future life is the supreme example of man's passion for disinterestedness. It is the most resolute and defiant of all possible answers to the question—Doth Job fear God for nought? The answer is—Yes, even though there be no God, and though he who fears is but a quintessence of dust, for a moment become conscious of itself. That is the last asceticism of which man in his passion for absolute values is capable. He proclaims them in the face of a universe which he asserts to be utterly indifferent to them.

But this asceticism is never, I think, the complete disbelief it supposes itself to be. Rather it is a kind of self-denial, a discipline which the mind imposes on itself so that it may be sure that its values are absolute. All the beliefs of man have been tainted with his egotism; they have supplied him with reasons for righteousness other than the right reasons, and have therefore perverted his very conception of righteousness. *Tantum religio potuit*

suadere malorum; and we are better without it in the form of dogma, for we cannot trust ourselves not to frame dogmas that will pervert our absolute values. As Nietzsche said, there is the will to power in all religion; and it continually deceives us by pretending to express our absolute values, while it really expresses our desire for rewards for ourselves and punishments for others.

All this is not consciously stated; but it is deep in the minds of many upright men and produces in them a habit of defiant incredulity, which is not so much rational as moral.

But there is also another, narrower reason why many excellent men deny a future life. What they really deny is not a future life generally, but the particular kind of future life which they have been taught to believe in, or the particular arguments advanced for it. It is a natural infirmity of the human mind thus to deny the general in the particular. There are, for instance, many people who suppose that the whole question of a future life is bound up with the notion that Heaven is a place above the sky and with the dogma of the physical Resurrection of Christ. It has never occurred to them to consider the two questions separately. Because they do not believe in a local Heaven, or in the physical Resurrection, they assume that they cannot believe in a future life. But it is possible not to be a Christian at all, to believe that Christ never existed, or never to have heard of the name Heaven, and yet to believe in a future life with Plato. Yet another irrelevant cause of disbelief in a future life is the strange assertion, commonly associated with the Christian faith, that animals have no souls. This did not matter so long as men saw no likeness between themselves and animals; but, now that a thousand discovered facts prove the likeness, the contention is obvious that, since animals have no souls, men can have none either, and must die like

dogs. But how if dogs die like men? How if animals are like men rather than men like animals? Perhaps the last piece of Christian humility we have to learn, with St. Francis, is that the black beetle is our brother. Perhaps it is the generic snobbery of man, more than anything else, that has deprived him of his highest hopes, just as all our snobberies deprive us of hope by emptying life of absolute values for us. I cannot believe in any real and universal fellowship unless I am ready to strip myself of all status; I cannot believe in a real future life so long as I think of it as a privilege of my own species. In the long run exclusiveness always shuts out those who exclude; for there is a terrible unconscious sincerity in the human mind by which all lies told for comfort or pride revenge themselves on the liar.

If in our beliefs we express our own sense of status, our own hatred, or our own selfish desires, those beliefs gradually empty the universe of values, and so become intolerable to us. Then, whatever truth there may be in them, is also rejected; hence much of our modern defiant refusal to believe in a future state, in a God, in a universe, which can be valued, is the result of a reaction from beliefs in a future state, a God, a universe, which men find that they cannot value. In his beliefs about these things man is always trying to express his absolute values; but his beliefs are incessantly tainted with his egotism and so mis-express his values. The values are permanent; they are the most certain and unchanging fact in the mind of man; they are always seeking expression and always failing of it because they are so deep and unconscious. There is in man always a desire to love something for its own sake, and not as it helps him to live, either in this life or in another. That passion, that appetite of the soul, persists always through all his changing bodily appetites, and because of it he can never be content with the pleasure he

gets from them. It is the most permanent fact of his mind, and to him the most permanent fact of the universe. Therefore he makes an incessant effort to conceive of the universe in terms of it. Since he has this incessant desire to love something for its own sake and values such a love, whether he attains to it or no, above all other experiences of his mind or body, he has also an unceasing desire to find in the very nature of the universe that which is worthy of his love. This desire, because of its very nature, cannot be satisfied by any merely comforting belief. It is indeed the reason why men are suspicious of all comforting beliefs; for, if I love God, or any one or anything, so that I may be comforted by my love, my love itself is spurious. I might as well try to fall in love with a woman because she is rich. But what man desires above all things is a love which is not spurious; and yet, because he desires that love so much, his egotism is always tempting him into spurious loves, into spurious certainties. And for a time perhaps he is certain, convinced by miracles or documentary proofs that he has found the true God whom he can love, the creator and ruler of a righteous universe. But gradually, through that terrible unconscious sincerity of his, the very proofs which have given him certainty cause him discomfort. He finds that the God who has been revealed to him so precisely does not satisfy his own values. Will he then give up the God or the values? The conflict between the God and the values rages through all religious history; for man clings tenaciously to both and is torn by the logic which would force him to reject the one or the other.

But nowhere is this conflict fiercer than in the matter of beliefs about a future life. For man has a disinterested desire to believe in a future life. It is not merely that the individual man wishes to survive, that his egotism cannot endure the thought

of a universe in which he himself will not be; it is that he wishes to find justice, not merely in the mind of man, but also in the order of the universe, and that, without a future life, there seems to him to be no justice, no significance in pain and grief. There are of course those who tell us that our pain and grief will profit posterity. That is not certain; and, even if it were, there would be no justice in it; for it is not justice that one man should profit by another's misfortunes; justice is a matter of the treatment of individuals, not of the race. There it is like love. If I do not love individuals, if I am not just to them, I do not love, I am not just, at all. So, if I believe in the love and the justice of God at all, I believe in His love and justice to individuals. What we really value is persons, not processes; and we cannot value a mere process of salvation for some abstraction called the race, if persons are utterly sacrificed to it. We cannot value a universe in which this sacrifice occurs, whatever brave efforts we may make to do so.

Since, then, there is in man this quite disinterested desire to believe in a future life, since it is an essential part of his desire to believe in a universe which he can value, man is continually tempted to find sure proofs that there is a future life. He is "hot for certainties"; and these very certainties, when he has attained to them, cause him discomfort. For, since they are spurious certainties, they are always tainted with his own egotism; and there is some lack of the very justice he desires in the future state of which he is certain. This lack of justice, though it may at first seem to work in his own favour, will afterwards take a terrible revenge upon him; for it is the injustice of an omnipotent God, in whose hands he is helpless. There is, for instance, the taint of egotism in all our traditional beliefs about rewards and punishments in a future state; men have always used those beliefs to

discourage certain kinds of conduct and to encourage others. Churches in particular have used them to suit their own purposes. They conceive of a God who gives to their enemies the kind of future life that they deserve. But if this God of ours is capable of punishing our enemies as we wish, He is capable also of punishing us as He wishes. If He will take vengeance *for* us He may take vengeance *on* us. Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord; and vengeance is a terrible weapon in the hands of an omnipotent being into whose nature you have read your own vindictiveness. Hence the belief in Hell, a Hell in which our enemies will suffer; but we do not know that we ourselves shall not meet them there.

Men have been utterly certain about this Hell, and they have not been able to escape from the logic of their own certainty. It is a danger to them as well as to their enemies; if they use it as a terror to others they cannot escape from the terror of it themselves. They can escape only by denying it altogether; and this denial comes to them at last, when they see that they cannot value the God whom they have made the instrument of their own vengeance. Hence the fierce reactions against our egotistical conceptions of a future life, of God, of the universe, reactions of man's values against his spurious certainties. In them man tries to destroy all that he has achieved; he despairs of belief altogether and finds his safety only in denial.

In this mood he is peculiarly suspicious of all beliefs in a future state; for they, more than all other beliefs, have been tainted with egotism and discredited by the frightful revenge they have taken upon it. Certainly belief in a future state has been the cause of more fantastic misery than any other kind of belief, the cause of more fantastic cruelty inflicted by man on man. The struggle for life is a human and kindly thing compared with the struggle for salvation. Egotism in time can be reasoned with and limited; but egotism projected

into eternity goes mad with its own terrors of eternity. Indeed there is an incongruity between egotism and eternity which produces madness in the egotist; for eternity itself is a conception of the unegotistic, the universal, mind; and when man projects his egotism into it, fighting for life as in time and space, the result is a nightmare.

So the mind of man is at the present day suffering from a nervous shock caused by his past failures to conceive of a future state. A burnt child dreads the fire; and the mind of man has been burnt by the fires of his own imagined Hell. So he flinches from the peril of any more conceiving. Rather he will keep his values and refuse the attempt to express them in any kind of faith, lest he should lose them in a failure of expression. For there is nothing so demoralising to the nature of man as these failures. They alone have power utterly to pervert his values, to make evil seem to him good. There is no cruelty like religious cruelty; for nothing but religious fanaticism can utterly remove the natural, kindly inhibitions of man's nature. Therefore men are shy of all faith lest it should lead to fanaticism. There is to them something sane and wholesome in the avowal that they are merely animals, for then at least they can be clean, decent animals and not morbid devils.

And yet, as I said to begin with, we cannot thus artificially and wilfully turn away from the question of a future state. For it does, whether we wish it or no, involve our whole view of the nature of the universe. Is the ultimate reality person or process; is matter the master of that which we call spirit, or spirit the master of that which we call matter? Is there such a thing as spirit, or merely a complicated mechanical process which becomes conscious of itself through some extra intensity in its working? There is no getting away from these two alternatives. Either spirit is the supreme fact, supreme over all changes of process and lasting through them all; or life is to be defined as a mechanical process

suffering from the illusion that it is not mechanical. In which case nothing distinguishes it from not-life except the illusion. If that be so, all our values are part of that superfluous illusion which is the essence of life. But however much we may seem to be comfortably imprisoned within the illusion of life, yet the fact that we can call it an illusion proves that we are not perfectly imprisoned. The cold draughts of reality do find their way into our warm prison-house. That consciousness of ours, which we are told is in its very nature a misunderstanding of the reality of ourselves, has by some means begun to be an understanding. The mechanical process is capable of knowing that it is one ; a remarkable triumph no doubt, but one which necessarily must tempt it to the doubt whether it is a mechanical process after all. Indeed the mechanical explanation of the universe would be quite satisfying, if only it were not we poor machines that had hit upon it. But the mere fact that we are capable of hitting upon it at once arouses a doubt of it in our minds. For, if we can thus triumphantly rid ourselves of our illusions and see that we are only machines, what is that property of the machine which is thus able to triumph over its own nature? This question the machine cannot but ask itself; and, as soon as it asks it, it ceases to be a machine to itself. Thus there must always be a reaction against all mechanical theories of life just as inevitable as the reaction against all spurious certainties of supernatural belief. The fact that we are capable of conceiving these theories will always in the long run make it impossible for us to believe them. We do finally exist for ourselves because we think ; and that which thinks has for us a reality superior to that which it thinks about, including our own flesh, a reality persisting through all changes of flesh, even the change which we call death.

Therefore men will continue to believe in a future life, will indeed believe in it more and more with every increase of consciousness. Such increases of conscious-

ness produce doubts of everything, especially doubts of all past beliefs; for the doubts are themselves part of the increase of consciousness, a necessary part of its conquest of its own subject matter. But consciousness, with every new conquest, becomes more and more sure of its own existence, of its own paramount reality. With all his dethronements of himself, with all his efforts to explain himself, even as a machine, man does become more and more aware of himself as a person. And it is this growing sense of his own reality which makes him cast about so wildly for explanations of himself. The more this person, which is himself, becomes to him an ultimate reality, the more he tries to explain it in terms of something else, of that which he observes rather than of that which he is. He cannot explain himself in terms of himself; nor, if he is an ultimate reality, can he learn the nature of that reality from that which is less real; yet he incessantly tries to do so in the mere process of increasing consciousness. There is this paradox in the whole process of our minds, that we become more aware of ourselves only through our increasing knowledge and experience of that which is not ourselves. And this paradox tempts us continually to believe that what we observe is true also of the observer.

We observe certain processes everywhere; they are truths to us about the external world; and we believe that they are also true of ourselves. We see the process we call death and we do not see beyond it; so we think that we are utterly subject to it, that it ends us, because we observe it to end certain formal arrangements of matter.

But though we may think this, the whole of ourselves is never utterly absorbed into that thought; for that which thinks remains behind the thought and is capable of a vast unconscious reserve from its own thoughts. Through these very thoughts man achieves the certainty of his own pre-eminent reality; and it persists

through all his doubts and disputations. At certain stages of history it expresses itself in a more and more triumphant faith in a future life, and in other things. But this faith, unfortunately, is apt to be too triumphant; it goes to man's head and makes him believe that he knows more precisely than he can know. The artist in him, the passionate expresser of faith, is confused with the man of science, and he rushes from passion to logic, as in the Athanasian Creed. He expresses his certainty in dogmas which, because of their very precision, become obsolete, for the precision is temporal though the faith be eternal. He parodies his own certainties in a wrong medium and then falls out of conceit with the parody. It is not enough for him to be sure of his own paramount reality. He must turn his hymns about it into guide-books of the New Jerusalem; he must take the Apocalypse for history looking forwards. And the result is that sooner or later he ridicules his own presumption and tells himself that these certainties of his are outworn superstitions because their expression is obsolete.

So we are always being told that the belief in a future state is an outworn superstition. But, if by superstition we mean a mere survival, nothing could be more untrue. For, as a matter of fact, men have attained to a belief in a future state very slowly, and are still in process of attaining to it, a process much hindered by their disgust of past failures to conceive it rationally. Primitive beliefs about it are nearly always beliefs in Ghosts, in appearances of the dead. For to the savage the dead exist only in the shadowy forms in which (as he supposes) they are from time to time seen by the living; they are not spirits in our sense at all but some kind of material vapour, all that is left of the flesh after the process of death, like the smoke that rises from a funeral pyre. And from this belief in a material phantom there comes a belief in a phantasmic survival of life in beings that—

Move among shadows a shadow and wail by impassable streams.

This survival is as inferior in reality to the life of a living man as the phantom is inferior to the living body. The whole notion arises from the belief that such ghosts are seen, and from the dreams and visions which are the support of that belief. They do not spring from any sense of the superior reality of person to process, of spirit to matter. This sense grows much later ; and the belief in a future life which is based on it can be sharply distinguished from the belief in ghosts. There is all the difference in the world between the faith of St. Paul and Homer's legends of the underworld.

And yet, even now, the faith is constantly confused with the superstition, and while some use the superstition to explain away the faith, by others it is employed to confirm it. Traditional Christian teaching has inherited from pre-Christian Judaism notions of a physical resurrection and a local Heaven above the sky, which, though a great advance on early ideas of ghost survival, seem crude and childlike to the modern mind.

Hence the very natural tendency to think the faith itself a mere superstition. In all things our faith is constantly weakened by our efforts to attain to a certainty we have not earned. We would have scientific proof where we cannot have it ; and we rely on scientific proof for that faith which can come to us, if at all, only through our whole way of life and thought. Hence the incessant excesses of our belief, and the incessant reactions against them. Hence also the strange fact that men's conscious beliefs are often utterly different from their unconscious. The conscious belief may be merely a reaction against some inadequate expression of belief ; the unconscious, all the while, being the slow deposit of faith produced by all that is disinterested in the man's life. This deposit is very slow, slower still for the race than for the individual ; and it is hindered by all perversities both of theory and of conduct. Whenever, for instance, any large body of men, whether a class, or a nation, or a whole civilisation, are filled

with the idea of their own peculiar status, whenever it seems to them that they are born better than other men, then there is a necessary decline in their sense of the justice of the universe, in their values, in their faith. Life loses significance for them because they have found a peculiar significance in themselves. It is no accident that the exultation of Christian faith in a future life was combined with the assertion that all men were equal in the sight of God. The Christian faith went with the renunciation of all status. That renunciation, not in words only, but in deeds and in the innermost recesses of the mind, was a necessary antecedent to the Christian happiness. And that happiness was the result of a collective effort made by a whole society, which would no longer believe the proud nonsense of the ancient world. But our modern world is full of a like proud nonsense. Let us get rid of that; let us once again assert the equality of all men before God, assert it, not only in word, but in thought and in the innermost recesses of the mind; and then we may leave our faith to grow of itself through our works.

II

THE MIND AND THE BRAIN

(A Discussion of Immortality from the Standpoint of Science)

BY

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SYNOPSIS

PAGE

The main problem of Psychology is the relation of Body and Mind. The mind is always found associated with a brain : but shows an increasing tendency to become independent . . 20

The main thesis of this paper : that the tendency of the mind towards independence and autonomy suggests the possibility of its becoming entirely liberated from the body, and continuing to exist in a disembodied state.

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II

THE MIND AND THE BRAIN

(A Discussion of Immortality from the Standpoint of Science)

I propose in this Essay to approach the subject from the scientific and empirical rather than from the philosophical and speculative point of view. Psychology presents us with no more difficult and certainly no more fundamental problem than that of the relation of the mind to the brain. Is the mind merely an activity of the brain cells, a product of nerve stimulation? Or, on the other hand, does the mind dominate the brain and use it as its instrument of expression? On our answer to this question depends our view as to the possibility of the survival of the mind after the destruction of the brain.

Let it be frankly admitted at the outset that we have no scientific proof of the existence of a disembodied mind, a mind entirely free from the limitations of the brain. All the philosophies in the world's history were cradled and nourished in a brain. In its highest flights of fancy or in its wrestling with the problems of life and destiny, the mind yet finds it necessary, like Antaeus, to keep in touch with mother earth from whose breast it draws its sustenance and strength.

Science, I repeat, gives us no evidence of the existence of a mind disembodied, naked and stripped of its covering of flesh—but always shows us mind and body associated with one another. Nevertheless, I propose

to bring forward evidence which will encourage us in the belief that in the course of evolution the mind shows an ever-increasing tendency to free itself from physical control and, breaking loose from its bonds, to assert its independence and live a life undetermined except by the laws of its own nature. The main argument of this essay is that the tendency of the mind towards independence and autonomy suggests the possibility of its becoming entirely liberated from the body, and continuing to live disembodied and free.

If we can demonstrate from the point of view of science the relative autonomy of the mind, we may, without doing violence to the facts of science, but rather by interpreting the processes which underlie them, deduce sufficient proof to justify the conclusion that, though the mind is in this life always associated with the brain, it can under suitable conditions survive the destruction of the brain: so that when the body crumbles into dust the mind may "spring triumphant on exulting wing."

Modern researches, particularly in the domain of Psychology, normal and abnormal, have opened our eyes to the vast possibilities, as yet unexplored, which lie latent in the mind. In our discussion we shall touch upon some of these discoveries in the sphere of Hypnotism, Telepathy, and Psychotherapy or mental healing, as well as in the more "legitimate" sphere of normal mental biology; and these studies will supply us with sufficient evidence to establish the claim of the mind to a progressively increasing independence, and to point to the complete liberation of the mind from the body as the probable goal and destiny of natural evolution.

It will be convenient to divide our investigation into three main sections:—

I. The main theories as to the relation of body and mind.

II. Evidence from the study of the mind in its

present stage of evolution, pointing to its independence of the body.

III. Evidence from the biological evolution of mind in the individual and in the race to show how it originated as a product of physical stimulation, but developed into a psychical force.

I. The Main Theories as to the Relation of Body and Mind

A. *The Materialistic.*—The first and most materialistic view regards the mind as a direct product of the brain. Huxley championed this theory under the name of "Epiphenomenalism." The mind, according to this theory, is "foam" thrown up as a result of the activity of the brain: a "mist" that rises from the surface of the deep, formed of fine particles of its waters. The mind accompanies the brain as a shadow does its substance, and though, like the shadow, it may appear to be more vivacious, it is in reality completely dependent upon the functioning of the brain. Every thought is the result of chemical or mechanical changes in the brain: an "idea" is but an explosion or discharge of a nerve cell: an emotion is an activity of the brain bursting into flame: every feeling of love, aspiration, or fear can be explained as due to purely physical changes which produce the vapour of thought or the aroma of virtue. A fuller knowledge of the physiology of the brain would enable us to demonstrate how certain mechanical forces in the mind of Shakespeare produced the character of Hamlet: and how the "Dead March" in *Saul* was the result of chemical combustion. Let it be understood that this is at present nothing more than a theory, for these chemical changes have never been demonstrated, and there is at present practically no direct evidence in favour of it. The effect of physical functions on the mind is no doubt important and far-reaching. It is all too obvious to those who are

compelled to live with sufferers from gout or dyspepsia, and we shall do justice to this aspect of the question later. But the reverse effect of the mind on body is incomparably greater. Meanwhile let us note that to the materialist there is but one answer to our original question : the mind will be abolished as soon as the brain decays : the shadow vanishes when the substance is removed: the music must end when the silver cord is loosed: the flame flickers and dies when the wood is burnt to ashes.

B. *The Idealistic.*—The second theory of the relation of mind to body carries us to the other extreme. In the beginning was mind, and mind created the physical world. The material universe is the plastic substance out of which mind may mould her thoughts : the instrument upon which she may play her melody of passion and grief and then cast it off. Without mind the earth would be without form and void : for it is the indwelling soul that gives form to the shell and gladness to the summer cloud. Without soul the leaf would wither, the massive crag fall, and the crystal crumble to an amorphous mass. Wordsworth, in his meditations on Tintern Abbey, has described the presence of this all-pervading mind.

> And I have felt
> A Presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts : a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean, and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man.

Mind is alone real and eternal : the brain is but a deposit thrown out, precipitated, and then formed into a coherent whole, and fashioned as the instrument by which the mind communicates with the material world and with other minds. The destruction of the brain will have no more effect on the existence of the mind than the breaking of a violin on the genius of a musician. The mind, being eternal, is undisturbed by the accidents

which may befall the material and temporary, whose very nature is to decay.

I do not propose to discuss in detail either of these two views. There is much to be said for both the materialist and the idealist position, and full justice must be done to both if we are to get at the truth. But we pass them by for the purposes of our investigation, because both views if accepted *in toto* prejudge the question at issue, and so rule out all further discussion of our main problem. Both the materialist and the idealist have in their philosophy decided beforehand whether the mind can survive the destruction of the brain: it is as impossible for the mind to survive on the one theory as it is necessary in the other: and no amount of argument could alter these conclusions.

C. *The Psychological.*—For the purposes of our discussion we take as our starting-point a third view,[1] which is more empirical and open to scientific investigation, namely, that of *Psycho-physical interaction.* On this view every thought which occupies the mind may have some influence on the nervous system: and, on the other hand, every change which takes place in the brain may leave its mark upon mental processes. This theory allows of a certain freedom of action to both the mind and the body, but yet affirms their interdependence. At one time it is the mind that initiates action which results in molecular and vascular changes in the brain: at other times it is the cellular activity of the brain which modifies the thoughts and emotions of the mind. For example: constant mental worry tends to diminish the secretion of bile and so leads to indigestion; on the other hand, the presence of bile in the blood not only produces jaundice but a depressed spirit and a "jaundiced" view of life. A mighty emotion can sway the body, throwing it into paroxysms now of fear and again of

[1] Psychology (I employ the word throughout as in modern scientific usage) in so far as it does not profess, like Idealism or Materialism, to be a philosophical theory of Ultimate Reality, is, of course, not exactly a third alternative to them.

joy. Those of us who have seen men in mortal terror, their eyes thrust out of their orbits, their hair like bristles, realise how the mind in its emotion can affect physical processes. On the other hand, all of us have experienced the depressing effect on the mind of even a slight physical indisposition, producing an irritability which we know to be unworthy of us but which we are unable to control. "The train of representation is determined all along the line from both the neural and the psychical side, with constant psycho-physical interaction, initiated now from this side, now from that." [1]

Nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh helps soul!

Taking our start, then, from this theory of "Psycho-physical interaction," and assuming that mind and body are constantly influencing one another, we have yet to study this interaction with a view to determining which of these, the mind or the body, is the *dominating factor* in our lives, and whether the neural or the physical exercises the more compelling influence over the other. If the mind is dominated by the body, we cannot hope that it can "carry on" after the destruction of the brain: but if the mind proves itself to have gained the mastery over the flesh and can force its commands upon the body, then we may infer that the mind holds its destiny in its own hands.

In order to determine this question of dominance let us proceed to our second main subject.

II. The Study of the Mind in its present Stage of Evolution, establishing its Dominating Influence over the Body

In order to do justice to both sides of the question I shall deal first of all with

(1) The influence of the body over mind, and then discuss

(2) The influence of the mind over the body.

[1] W. McDougall in *Mind and Body*.

(1) *The Influence of the Body over the Mind*

An impartial study of facts shows that the mind is not that independent, detached, self-determined entity which some would have us believe, but is often conditioned by the state of the body and brain. Some of the glandular secretions of the body, the thyroid, for instance, and the ovarian, have a marked effect upon the mind. Most of my readers will be familiar with that form of idiocy in children due to want of the thyroid secretion. This dull, heavy, dribbling child, without intelligence and without character, is treated with a course of thyroid extract and becomes in a few months as quick-witted and self-respecting as the average child of its age. The discovery of the pathology of Cretinism and its consequent cure have no doubt contributed largely to the diminution in the number of "village idiots" which we cannot but have noticed. The mind and intelligence in this case were obviously arrested by the want of this physical secretion, and its artificial supply was followed by the liberation of the mental faculties and the growth of intellect.

Some forms of insanity, such as melancholia, also seem to be determined by physical conditions. In many cases such a disease may have followed and been partly caused by mental stress.[1] But the treatment of the mind alone seems to have little effect on this disease, which seems to have a physical as well as a psychic origin, and is probably due to an auto-intoxication, the toxins of which must be purged from the body before the mind can become sane and healthy again. It is probable, indeed, that a good deal of what we call "temperament" is due to the secretions and toxins which circulate in our system. It is interesting to note that popular language suggests that the origin of these

[1] I have been particularly struck in dealing with the insane amongst Naval men, with the fact that even in mental diseases of an undoubted *organic* origin like General Paralysis of the Insane, the onset of the symptoms appears frequently to have been precipitated by a shock of a *mental* character.

states is due to physical causes : we speak, for instance, of a man being "phlegmatic," *i.e.* charged with a superabundance of "phlegm" or lymph : of another as "liverish" : and use phrases like "vent his spleen," "make his gorge rise," which ascribe mental symptoms to physical causes. We are not, of course, defending the use of such phrases as being accurate (particularly in the case of the liver, that long-suffering organ, which has shared with the kidney most of the abuse of the quack), but to indicate how the popular mind has fastened on the idea that one's temperament is influenced by the effect of physical conditions on the mind.

Another indication of the dependence of the mind on the brain is to be found in the phenomena of localisation in the brain. If the visual centres in the occipital lobe of the brain be removed or injured, we lose our sight : if the area anterior to the occipital lobe be injured, we retain our sight, can see things and copy them, but we fail to understand their *meaning*. That is to say, a *psychical* quality is lost with the loss of this piece of brain, clearly indicating that besides the sensory centres there are psychical centres in the brain upon the integrity of which our mental condition to some extent depends.

Let us for our third illustration point to facts familiar enough to all. Let the reader try for himself this experiment. When he is feeling gloomy and depressed, let him force himself to smile : he will immediately find the influence of his action in relieving his gloom. Let a man who is walking with shoulders bent and eyes cast to the ground in thought, raise his head, square his shoulders, and walk upright. He will immediately experience a martial feeling of self-possession. So, clenching the hand, setting the jaw, producing a sneer, and many other physical actions, have a tendency to produce the mental emotion with which they are associated. A very familiar illustration

of this same law is that the attitude of prayer helps us to realise a reverent spirit. We shall have reason to refer to this subject again later: for the present we are only concerned to show how physical conditions can modify mental processes.

Let us, then, do justice to this side of the question and admit that the brain has its share in influencing the processes of the mind, and realise that the mind cannot afford to spurn the advances of the body, but must for its own health maintain amicable relations with it. The *mens sana* and the *corpus sanum* are intimately connected.

(2) *The Influence of the Mind on the Brain and Nervous System.*

Having acknowledged the service rendered by the brain to the mind, we turn to the facts pointing to the influence of the mind on the brain and nervous system. We shall find that the mind not only influences the body, but that it has an increasing tendency to dominate the body and control its sensations.

Let us take a common illustration. A woman receives the news of the sudden death of her husband. This is a "psychic" cause: we call it psychic because it is not the message as spoken that produces the effect on her (she had often before felt the impact of the sound-waves of the word "death"), but its *significance* for *her*. We see the flush—an attempt of the heart to drive sufficient blood to the brain to stand the shock—the subsequent pallor, the sickness, the trembling, and ultimately the loss of consciousness, by which means nature delivers her from the agony of mental pain. These phenomena of the circulation and nervous system are produced by a cause that is purely psychical in origin, and prove that the mind is able to use the body to express its feelings and emotions, like the evening wind which makes the trees rustle as in merriment or moan as in sadness.

Again, there is conclusive evidence that the mind can completely dominate sensations, not only by controlling but even by abolishing all feeling of them. Those, for instance, who are accustomed to use microscopes are able to produce a *psychic blindness* in one eye. Whilst the right eye, let us say, is kept focussed on the slide, the left eye is kept open, but is yet blind to the rays of light which come to it. The beginner is at first confused with rays coming from the slide and from the surroundings simultaneously, but a little training enables him to cut out the vision of the surroundings in the left eye even though this eye is kept open. The rays of light from the table, stand, and other surroundings are still striking his retina, but the mind refuses to admit them. The mind thus has the power to refuse the sensations offered to it and to decide which sensations it will reject and which accept.

A similar phenomenon is observed in the hypnotic state. A hypnotised subject may be told to observe every picture on a wall except one, and he will no longer see this picture. His sight is not impaired in any way, since he can observe the other pictures, but a psychic blindness has been produced, the mind having the power to refuse the sensations due to the rays of light coming from that one picture. "Having eyes they see not."

I have at the present time a patient who, in the hypnotised state, converses with me and obeys my commands. But should any one else command him or speak to him he is completely deaf to the voice and makes no response, telling me that he hears nothing. But as soon as I tell him that he will hear the other voice, he immediately responds, and carries out the commands of the man to whose voice he was previously deaf. The stimuli enter the brain alike in both cases: but in the first case the mind is psychically deaf to them.

The extremes of concentration of which the mind is capable are exemplified in the analgesia or loss of the

sensation of pain which can be produced in a hypnotised person. I remember a case (though I was not fortunate enough to see it) in one of the operating theatres of Edinburgh Royal Infirmary in which a major abdominal operation (for hernia) was performed on a student with no anaesthetic except that of hypnotic suggestion. The patient was admitted to the hospital the day before the operation, was hypnotised by his own family doctor that night and told under hypnosis that the next day, before the operation, the house surgeon of the wards would tell him to sleep, and that he would pass into a condition in which he would feel no pain. The house surgeon duly carried out his instructions, and though, as far as I remember, he had never had any acquaintance with hypnotism before, his suggestion produced the desired condition in the patient. The patient was operated on painlessly, and recovered without discomfort. Indeed, hypnotism is the ideal anaesthetic if the patient is sufficiently susceptible to its influence, for it is followed by none of those nauseating symptoms of chloroform poisoning so distressing to the patient, and, what is even more important, it is not accompanied by the same degree of shock. Hypnotic anaesthesia differs from that of chloroform in that it is an anaesthetic of the mind, in contrast to that of chloroform, which produces its effect on the brain by melting the myelin fat round the nerve cells, or by some other chemical action which cuts off these cells from external stimuli.

These illustrations of the reaction of the mind under hypnosis are extremely important, for they show us the mind so dominating the senses that it can abolish the sensations coming from them, and maintain an attitude of complete indifference to the most urgent calls of physical pain. What more suggestive evidence could we have that the mind is well on its way to that state in which it may dispense altogether with the physical, and wing its way to freedom and independence?

Hypnotism, however, has discovered for us another truth of great importance, namely, that the mind presides over even those functions of the body which we regard as "vegetative"; we refer to the secretions of glands, the flow of gastric and other digestive juices, the function of digestion, the peristaltic movements of the bowels, changes in the calibre of the arteries and so forth. Are these functions controlled and regulated by the mind, or by purely mechanical or reflex processes? Over these actions we certainly have no *voluntary* control. Our efforts to stop ourselves blushing are as futile as our attempts to cure a spasm of colic by force of will or expenditure of thought. All these effects are normally the result of reflex action, and are regulated by the so-called autonomic or sympathetic nervous system. It is usually the presence of food in the stomach that excites the stomach to secrete its hydrochloric acid, and it is the pressure of food, or the irritation of some poison on the bowel wall, that causes it to contract into a colic spasm in order to drive out the irritant: it is the effect of heat upon the skin that dilates the arterioles, thus bringing the blood to the skin surface, and so cooling the blood by contact with the outside air. But it seems to have escaped the observation of some physiologists that the sympathetic nervous system, which normally acts reflexly, may itself be controlled and modified by mental processes. It is true that our *conscious* will has no influence over them, but the "unconscious" part of the mind certainly has the power to initiate or modify these functions of secretion and circulation, as we may prove by experimenting with a subject under hypnosis. Let us try this simple experiment (which the writer has performed): let a subject be hypnotised, and while he sits calmly and quietly in his chair, suggest to him that his hand is becoming suffused with blood. In the course of half a minute or so this hyperaemia is produced in the hand indicated, whilst the other hand remains

pallid. The secretion of perspiration may be similarly regulated. In some rare but well-authenticated cases blisters have been produced on the skin by mental suggestion under hypnosis.[1] Again, the action of the intestines, over which the conscious volition has no direct control, is easily regulated by mental suggestion when the subject is under hypnosis, and thus constipation may be rapidly and easily cured.[2] So we might review the other vegetative functions of the body, but the illustrations given will be sufficient to prove that the mind exerts a controlling influence over even the reflex and autonomic functions of the nervous system, and may at any time assert its claim to regulate and direct them.

The Nature of Hypnotism and Suggestion

Before proceeding to discuss the power of the mind in curing bodily disease, it may not be out of place to refer to the nature of the hypnotic state and of "suggestion." The name "Hypnotism" was originally introduced by Braid to describe this state because it resembled sleep in its mode of induction, its outward appearance of quiescence, and in the loss of memory produced. But Braid abandoned the term because it was found that the mind was really in a state of activity, and in a subsequent hypnosis a person could recall all that occurred in the previous séance. It therefore became the fashion to attribute the phenomena of hypnotism to a "subconscious self." There seems to me, however, to be a much simpler explanation, and one which avoids the necessity of assuming a separate "self." Hypnotism, far from being a condition of sleep, is a condition of heightened attention. In this

[1] Since writing this I have performed this experiment; cf. p. 74, Note A.

[2] I have at present a patient with chronic constipation whose condition became so severe that he was invalided from his duties as a Probationary Flight Officer and his commission cancelled. When he came under my care he had for months been treated with the most drastic purgatives. After a fortnight's treatment by Psychotherapy his disability has disappeared and he is looking a different being. The condition in his case had been brought on and perpetuated by worry.

state the attention is so fixed on some dominating idea, as, for instance, that the subject is in a garden of flowers, that his mind is abstracted from everything else, and there results a dissociation of consciousness. In short, there is produced the same kind of psychic blindness which I have illustrated in the bacteriologist looking through the microscope, and in the patients whose indifference to the sensation of pain I have cited. The state of hypnosis, then, is a state of abstraction from the world produced by devoting the whole attention to one idea, or to a single complex of ideas.

The method of inducing hypnotism also suggests this as the true explanation. Whatever the method employed—gazing at a bright light; listening to the monotonous beat of a metronome; feeling the soothing sensation of "passes," or picturing some quiet scene suggestive of rest—there is one feature common to all and essential to the success of the hypnosis, namely, that the attention of the subject is arrested by one idea or group of ideas to the exclusion of all others. This is brought about partly by suppressing other sensations, and partly by focussing the attention upon the object selected. The hypnotist having once arrested the attention, and fixed it upon one idea to the exclusion of all other ideas, thoughts, and sensations, can then shift it from one point to another, from one idea to another, to each of which the subject gives his undivided attention. The magnet, as it moves from point to point over a sheet of iron filings, concentrates the filings and accumulates them into a little heap, now here, now there. The hypnotist, working on the mind of the subject, first arrests his attention, concentrating it on one fixed point, and then is able to shift his attention from point to point. During the hypnosis the attention is at such a pitch of concentration, and is raised to such high pressure, that if a channel towards motor discharge or sensory feeling

is opened, the accumulated energy finds an immediate outlet in action. There is no room here for the criticism of the reason or for inhibition: all opposition is swept away, so that the subject forthwith performs the action or is swayed by the feelings suggested, however irrational these may be.[1]

It is interesting to note, however, that this flood of energy is not sufficient to overcome the moral sense although it may override the ordinary barriers of convention and perform actions that are stupid. The hypnotised person will refuse to do anything that is strongly repugnant to him. I have, indeed, had such opposition in a recent case of mine, where the patient consistently refused to carry out an action to which he was opposed, even when he was deeply hypnotised. The case in point was one in which I wished to take out the patient's teeth with hypnosis as an anaesthetic, as he was too weak in health to have gas. For some reason he had a rooted objection to this, which I could not overcome. I could make him do all manner of stupid things, laugh and cry alternately, or dance on one leg, and could stick pins into him without his apparently feeling it, but any attempts to persuade him to have his teeth out invariably aroused his opposition, and he absolutely refused to have it done. In another case of mine the patient, under deep hypnosis, persisted even in an absolute lie, on which he had staked his reputation, so rooted was his determination to carry out the deception. The hypnotised person is therefore not the automaton some people would have us believe.

This theory of hypnosis as a condition of heightened

[1] Since writing this account of hypnotism I have read an article by Dr. W. McDougall, of Oxford, on the "State of the Mind during Hypnosis." His view differs from that suggested in this paper, in that he lays emphasis not on the heightened attention of the one idea, so much as the suppression of the remaining ideas and sensations in the brain. Both views, however, agree that hypnosis is the *relative* predominance of one idea or group of ideas: and both seem to be opposed to the relegating of hypnotic phenomena to a "subconscious self." I have the feeling that the "subconscious self" has had too much imposed upon it by an admiring public.

attention also explains the tremendous force that lies in suggestion under hypnosis. The suggestions of health and well-being absorb for the time the whole mind and exert a correspondingly powerful effect. If presented to the mind in its ordinary waking state such suggestions are immediately made null and void by the reason, which criticises the ideas suggested and tells the patient that he is, in fact, not well, that his digestion is out of order, and his business is going to the dogs. But under hypnosis the reason is inhibited and the whole attention of the patient is concentrated on the idea that he is becoming vigorous and strong, that he will be determined to tackle his business courageously, that his appetite will improve, and that he will forget his melancholy in a flood of happiness.

By "suggestion" we mean the insinuation of an idea into the mind in such a way that it does not clash with the critical and reasoning faculty. This is essentially the nature and meaning of "suggestion" in the therapeutic sense. The suggestion exerts its influence on the mind owing to the fact that it is working without the opposition of the critical faculty, which is abolished by hypnotism or the induction of a quiescent state in the subject. Having induced this state we proceed to make these "suggestions" of health and well-being, which we have already described, and which produce so potent an effect on the personality of the patient. We shall proceed later to deal with this power which the mind possesses of modifying physical functions and curing physical disease.

Auto-suggestion and Trance

The similarity of Hypnotic states to the condition of Trance makes it necessary to say a little on this subject, particularly as it has an important bearing on the subjects discussed later in Essays VII. and VIII., pp. 261 f., 322 ff.

First let us enumerate the various stages of Hypnosis. Probably the simplest type of the hypnotic state is "reverie"—that condition in which the mind is absorbed with its own thoughts of some far distant scene, or pleasing recollection of the past, and so becomes oblivious to all its surroundings. Some people are more prone to these moods of abstraction than others, and will walk along the busiest thoroughfares and yet be entirely dissociated from all the sounds and sights of their environment. This is really a very early stage of hypnosis, in this case, self-imposed.

When I hypnotise a patient the first state into which he passes is one in which he is completely conscious of all that is taking place, but is flaccid and unable to produce any voluntary movement. In my own experience of being hypnotised, I have found this stage to be one of extraordinary lucidity. One's mind seems to pass into space in which the atmosphere is rarefied and thought clear and electric. One seems to possess a bird's-eye view of events, to see them in their entirety, and yet to be conscious of their minutest detail. This condition most of us have experienced when lying half-awake in bed. We know perfectly well all that transpires, but we have not the voluntary power to move and get up. It is significant that many poets, philosophers, orators, and even mathematicians receive some of their greatest inspirations in this condition, and solve problems which months of previous labour had failed to elucidate. The clairvoyance of the crystal-gazer appears to belong to this stage, and it is probably whilst in this condition that mystics and seers have their visions. As a rule, they are not aware of having been in a state of mind in any sense abnormal, but feel that they have their wits about them during the whole period. This stage of hypnosis is an excellent one for treatment by suggestion, for in it the suggestions made are exceptionally lucid and carry a conviction which ordinary speech could never produce.

As I proceed with my hypnosis the patient passes into a condition in which anaesthesia can be produced. The patient may be perfectly conscious of what the hypnotist is saying and may remember it all afterwards, but yet under suggestion can be made to feel no pain. This stage of hypnosis introduces us to the state of mind of men who have severe wounds inflicted upon them in battle, but are not conscious of their wound, nor of the pain that it should cause, until the excitement of the battle is over and their minds become less abstracted from their condition. It also explains the ecstasy of the martyr whose flesh is torn by wild beasts or who is burnt at the stake but yet feels nothing because of the blessed vision of angels or his glorified Lord.

In the next stage of hypnosis the patient passes into a state resembling sleep; not that he loses consciousness of what is taking place around, for he is perfectly aware of what is said to him and of the people about him, but when he is "wakened" he forgets all that has transpired, and feels that he has merely been to sleep.

A stage further than this, and the patient may, on the initiative of another or of himself, be made to speak, rise up, walk about the room, and so behave that a casual observer would not realise that there was anything unusual in his behaviour. Yet in his normal waking state the patient has not the faintest recollection of what has happened. A part of his life has been wiped out of his normal memory.[1] This is a condition analogous to that of the spiritualistic medium, who, however, produces this condition by auto-suggestion. In it the mind is extremely sensitive to suggestions of the hypnotiser. It is only reasonable to believe that when this condition is produced by auto-suggestion, and the subject passes into the trance with the avowed

[1] The analogous pathological condition is seen in cases such as that of a patient of mine at the present time who remembers being in hospital in Mesopotamia, and then suddenly found himself at home in Surrey. He had meanwhile lived for six months, visiting Bombay and returning home by Suez, but all this was completely abolished from his memory.

intention of getting into communication with a certain person, his mind will be particularly sensitive to thoughts about that person, whether these come by direct communication with the spirit of the person, as the spiritualist holds, or whether from some other mind, as the telepathist considers more probable.

We see, then, that in the phenomena of abstraction and trance we may find conditions analogous to those of hypnosis whichever stage of hypnosis we take. In the first stage there is day-dreaming; in the second the clear mental state so conducive to prayer, and so stimulating to the mind of the thinker, the seer, and the visionary; instances of the third stage we have in the indifference to pain due to the ecstasy of the martyr or the elation of the soldier on the field of battle; and finally the somnambulism of the medium. I have some hesitation in thus pointing out the analogy and identity of these states of mind with the stages of hypnosis, lest it should be thought that I am merely "reducing" them to hypnotism. I would therefore like it to be understood that in my own mind this "reduction" in no way limits the value of these states of mind. These are all most valuable, each in its own sphere, and the fact that they are shown to be natural states of mind does not make them less valuable as weapons of the spiritual. My purpose is not to show that these states of mind are "only hypnotism," but to show that they can be scientifically induced, and in fact are induced in the various stages of what we call, for want of a better name, "Hypnotism."

There are, however, certain deductions of some importance which I may be permitted to point out.

First, that the various stages of hypnosis can be induced without the aid of a hypnotist, by auto-suggestion. It is obvious that moods of abstraction and the anaesthesia of the soldier are produced *from within* and not by suggestions from without. So also is the state of mind of the crystal-gazer, the Hindu,

and the saint at prayer. The deeper stages of amnesia and somnambulism are not so often self-induced, but may be, as in the medium and the sleep-walker, in the former voluntarily, in the latter involuntarily, but in both without the aid of another person.

In the second place, let us understand that a person may be in a condition analogous to the early stages of hypnosis and not be aware of anything abnormal taking place. A patient recently told me that I could not hypnotise him, as others had tried without success. I induced him, however, to let me try. I hypnotised him and stuck a pin through a fold of skin in his hand, and continued my suggestions of healing his "shell-shock." When he was "wakened" he said he had been awake all the time, had his wits about him and heard every word I said. I then pointed to his hand, and to his great surprise he saw the pin sticking through his flesh without causing any pain. I may add that he is now quite cured of his headaches, trembling, sleeplessness, and general nervousness. But I mention the case to show how in this stage, as in the ecstasy of martyrs and wounded soldiers, as well as in crystal-gazers, it is quite possible to be in such a degree of "trance" and yet be conscious of nothing abnormal.

Lastly, I would emphasise the fact that hypnosis is not an abnormal condition in the sense of being pathological. In its early forms it is exemplified in every mood of abstraction in which we indulge. The later and deeper stages are merely an exaggeration of this mental abstraction in various degrees.

There is no doubt that hypnotism carries with it its own dangers, which makes it necessary that only duly qualified men should be permitted to use it, but there is no branch of surgery or medicine of which the same cannot be said. Patient work and experience in operations on the mind as well as on the body teach one what are the dangers and how to avoid them. In neither case, in my opinion, is any one justified in using

his skill for public entertainment, and perhaps not even for experiment. Personally, I make a point of rarely using hypnotism except for the cure of disease, not because of its dangers—for I consider there are none to the experienced hypnotist—but because it debases the just uses of a valuable therapeutic agency.

The Power of the Mind to heal Bodily Disease by Mental Suggestion

In the preceding paragraphs I have put forward the rival claims of the psychologist and the neurologist to explain the functions of the mind: the one claiming that mental processes are the outcome of changes in the brain cells, the other maintaining that the mind is also able to initiate activity and control the functions of the body. We have now to bring forward a further contribution to the solution of this problem, and can put the rival claims to the *test of successful treatment.* If mental suggestion, by itself, can cure diseases of the body we are compelled to conclude one of two things: either that the physical disease had its origin in the mind; or, if the disease is organic, that the mind has a direct influence in curing organic physical disease. In either case the mind is the dominant factor in causing or curing bodily disease.

Neurasthenia

Let us take the commonest of all these "borderland" diseases, namely, Neurasthenia. It is a disease in which both mental and physical symptoms are well marked. The physical lassitude, irritability of reflexes, sluggishness of bodily functions, constipation, headache, backache, dyspepsia, fatigue after the slightest exertion, and a "tired feeling" even after a long night's rest, find their mental counterpart in irritability of temper, indifference to the joys and sorrows of life, brooding, introspection,

worry, and loss of the power to concentrate the mind. Most of us can claim relationship to some one who was "born tired" and has been tired ever since.

This disease of neurasthenia is claimed both by the neurologist and the psychologist, and is treated by these rival claimants each in his own way.

Its Origin

The *neurologist* says that the worry and want of concentration and other symptoms are caused by physical or chemical changes in the brain structure. "If we could," says he, "but carry our investigations far enough, as some day we shall, we should discover that there are certain chemical changes in the brain cells to account for the worry and lassitude." Huxley, for instance, suggested that every psychosis has its cause in an underlying neurosis. This is at present nothing more than a hypothesis: for no one has yet demonstrated the chemical changes in the brain cells that are supposed to cause the mental symptoms. But it is, of course, a perfectly tenable hypothesis on which to make an investigation. If the absence of thyroid secretion can produce idiocy, it is within the bounds of possibility that some toxin may produce neurasthenia. The thyroid, the suprarenal body, the pituitary body, high blood pressure, low blood pressure, have all been accused by physiologists of being the cause of neurasthenia. I believe that the neurologist is sometimes correct. There is a type of "neurasthenia" due to wasting diseases like cancer or an organically disorganised digestion. I am convinced, however, that the ordinary type of neurasthenia is not produced in this way, and this opinion is backed by the history of its origin in any particular case and by success in treatment by mental suggestion alone, as I shall illustrate later.

The *psychologist* (I use the term in its modern

scientific, not in its more familiar philosophical sense) looks at the disease from the other point of view. The condition of the mind, he says, produces the physical symptoms. The worry is primary and the physical lassitude secondary. The psychotherapist, therefore, delves into the mind of the patient, either by questioning him directly, or by employing the method known as "psycho-analysis," to try to discover the underlying mental cause. He finds that in a very large number of cases the disease originated soon after some violent mental strain, usually associated with a strong emotional element. Disappointment in a love affair is one of the most common : grief at the loss of wife or child : the fear of battle : the shock of being torpedoed : anxiety over business affairs : some wrong committed and the consequent fear of exposure. Every clergyman and doctor is familiar enough with these conditions, which eat out the soul and depress the spirit of the victim, and make life so heavy that he considers it better to die than to live. Thus the *origin* of the complaint in itself suggests that the psychologist is right in diagnosing the disease as mental rather than physical.

Its Treatment

The correctness of this diagnosis is further confirmed by success in treatment by mental suggestion. In the treatment of neurasthenia the *neurologist*, proceeding on the assumption that the symptoms are caused by physical changes in the brain, treats it accordingly. Ascribing it at one time to a toxaemia of the gastro-intestinal tract, one physician treats the patient with intestinal antiseptics, laxatives, and sour milk : another stimulates the nervous system with strychnine or soothes it with bromides : a third puts the patient on a strict milk diet, treats him with massage and electricity. Yet another physician, diagnosing the condition as "only neurasthenia," sends him off on a sea voyage or

to a spa. By these means the patient may or may not be cured ; usually he is not. But if he is cured, it has still to be proved by the neurologist that it was not the mental influences, such as the personality of the physician, or the mental relaxation of the spa, even more than the change of air and the sulphur, that produced the cure.

The *psychotherapist* in his treatment approaches the patient from an entirely different point of view. Starting from the discovery that in most cases the symptoms of neurasthenia commenced after some mental strain, he examines his patient to find out if he has had any such experience. Having discovered the supposed cause either by questioning or by psycho-analysis,[1] he begins to treat the patient with mental suggestion. Let us suppose we have a patient suffering from worry, the disease of the age. The psychologist treats the patient by verbal suggestions alone and cures the worry. The only conclusion we can draw is that the disease was the result of mental causes and not due to a physical defect : or, on the other hand, if the disease is said to be organic, we must conclude that the verbal suggestion

[1] I cannot stay to describe the methods of psycho-analysis in this paper. Freud's method is to diagnose the patient's condition by analysing his dreams, which are said to represent the patient's suppressed wishes expressing themselves in symbolic form. Jung's method is that of word-association tests, the patient being given certain words and asked to reply with the first word that comes to the mind. The principle underlying this method appears to be that emotion checks thought. In this way certain words (*e.g.* the word "water" to a patient who had contemplated suicide by drowning) arouse emotions. The patient, therefore, delays in giving the reaction word. Both by the delay in replying and also by the nature of the patient's reply, the emotional complex in the patient's mind is laid bare to the physician even when the patient is unwilling to divulge it or has even forgotten it. Personally, in my investigations I combine the word-association test with another method suggested and used by the Freudian school, viz. the "free-association" method. Having determined the words, *e.g.*, "water" in the illustration above, to which the patient reacts emotionally, we take these words in rotation and ask the patient to say exactly what comes into his mind when he thinks of the word "water" and the other words reacted to ; what picture he sees before his mind, and so on. One finds that whichever word is taken the thoughts ultimately wander to the one important event—the central emotional complex of the mind—the desire to drown himself. I may add that the fact that Freud attributes practically all cases of hysteria to sexual causes has unfortunately blinded many to the real value both of his psychology and of the methods of psycho-analysis. It is quite possible, however, to employ his methods without accepting his conclusions.

of the doctor is able to produce a change in the diseased brain cells. The neurologist is thus placed on the horns of a dilemma, and is compelled to admit the dominating influence of the mind in either case.

In order to illustrate the cure of such cases by mental suggestion, I may be permitted to mention some of my own cases. The first case treated was that of a gentleman in Edinburgh who for six years had been suffering from worry, sleeplessness, and haunting suicidal tendencies. He came to the conclusion, as many such patients do, that he was going mad, and fear of the asylum made him worse. I found that the symptoms first arose when he was lying ill with diphtheria six years previously, and when in this prostrate condition he received news of the death of his little girl. Assuming this to have been the cause of neurasthenia I put the patient into a hypnoidal condition (in which, however, he was quite conscious)[1] and treated him with appropriate suggestions, pointing out to him the cause of the ailment, urging him to face it and then bury the dead past: stimulated his faith in immortality and expectation of reunion with his lost child: impressed on him the need of abandoning worry and care: taught him how to be happy though worried, and prevailed on him to abandon his anxieties and to renew his strength by resting his soul in the Everlasting Arms. He was cured after two sittings of about half an hour each, and when I last saw him, some eight years after the treatment, he had had no return of the symptoms. I would not have it believed that all cases of neurasthenia are so easily cured, but bring forward the illustration to show what effect purely mental suggestion can have on this class of disease which the neurologist attributes to changes in brain cells, but which the psychologist rightly regards as mentally produced. So rapid a cure

[1] I may here repeat in parenthesis that for therapeutic purposes complete unconsciousness in hypnotism is quite unnecessary, the only condition required being the suppression of the critical faculty, so that the mind may be the more powerfully concentrated on the suggestions to a degree impossible in ordinary conversation.

can only be accounted for on the hypothesis that the cause was mental.

In the course of writing the account of this case I have had a visit from an officer recently returned from the front, who was formerly a patient of mine for psychotherapy. A year ago he was a clerk in a shipping office. He came to me with the symptoms of physical exhaustion, anaemia, and sleeplessness. In addition he had delusions that anything he touched, and particularly his pen, was covered with microbes. Bits of paper about the street and about the house filled him with the same fear of contamination. It will be readily understood that such delusions completely incapacitated him for his work, for nothing could persuade him to write a letter, and he was compelled to abandon his work suffering from a nervous breakdown. Were the mental symptoms in his case due to some toxin affecting the brain? or, on the other hand, were the physical symptoms caused by mental disturbance? The test of successful treatment will furnish us with an answer. An attempt to discover the cause of the condition by questioning failed to elicit any satisfactory reason for the disease. I therefore applied the method of "psycho-analysis." By this method I discovered the true cause of his malady; it turned out, as is so often the case, to be a suppressed anxiety of a strongly emotional character, the nature of which I do not feel justified in making public. In this case the mere realisation by the patient of the latent cause, once it was discovered, was practically sufficient to cure the condition, on the same principle that the best cure for a "tune running in the head" is to sing it aloud, and the only cure for a hidden sin is to confess it. I saw this officer a year ago a candidate for the asylum: I see him now having been through the fighting of the "Devil's Wood" in which one third of his battalion was laid low, but far from being afflicted with the nerve shock one would have expected

he has won for himself a commission, and is one of the few men I have met who genuinely desires to return to the trenches. These two cases are sufficient to prove that the primary lesion was not to be sought for in the brain cells but in the mind, and illustrate the power which the mind is capable of exercising not only over mental but over physical conditions.

"*Shell Shock*"

The experience of the war has given to medical science another group of interesting examples of "borderland" disease, namely those grouped together as "shell shock."[1] I have at the present time under my care men of the Royal Navy who are suffering from blindness, loss of speech, loss of control over limbs and body which results in a condition of perpetual tremor even during sleep, and other physical nervous disorders, all of which are produced by "shell shock." In these cases the affection of the nervous system is of a functional and not an organic nature, and exhibits no changes such as the microscope or test-tube can discover. Examined by all the known tests the affected nerve is in no sense different from any normal nerve. This may, of course, be due to the imperfection of our laboratory methods, but both the origin and the treatment of these interesting cases encourage us in the belief that "shell shock" is primarily a mental rather than a nervous disease. One or two cases I quote. One patient of mine, J. D., was on board a drifter when it was attacked by a submarine. He was at the gun and eagerly gazing across the waves at the submarine. This slight strain on the eyes, coupled with the great emotional strain on the nervous system, produced a blindness by the next morning which was almost complete. Another patient I am still treating was occupied one Sunday in dragging

[1] I use the term in the very widest sense, as practically equivalent to war stress.

bodies out of the débris of an explosion. Next morning he woke up to find his arm paralysed. This paralysis, like the blindness of the other patient, is only of a hysterical type. I have obtained some movement of his fingers under hypnosis, and still hope to cure him entirely. A young Belgian I saw had a bullet wound in his arm and lost the use of the forearm. The surgeon, therefore, cut down to examine the nerves which he supposed to have been injured. He found no evidence of injury, the wound being only a flesh wound. The lad was treated by the physician in charge with suggestion, in this case without hypnosis, and when I saw him he was well on the way to recovery. I have read of another case, one of many that have appeared in the public press, of a soldier who was struck dumb in battle but was suddenly cured on being kissed by a young lady visiting at his bedside!

Perhaps I may dwell with a little more detail on one or two of my cases. One of my patients was in H.M.S. —— when she was blown up by a mine. When I saw him about sixteen months after the event he was in a condition of extreme terror; day and night he had the sight of the sinking ship with all its horrors in his mind. He had no control over his emotions, was "blubbering" continually, and was shaking all over from head to foot. If a plate fell in the ward, he would literally jump out of bed and hide under it. After the first treatment by mental suggestion his tremors were greatly lessened: after the second he could control his feelings and could discuss the sinking of the ship without emotion; his headaches had also disappeared: and after further treatment, he was so far cured that he expressed his desire to undergo an operation on his ear and throat, the very thought of which had previously produced in him a spasm of terror. Another patient, J. S., aged 42, was in the Dardanelles, on a mine-sweeper which was frequently shelled. When I saw him his hair had turned white

with the strain of work and constant exposure to danger. He had bad nightmares, and tremors, especially of the limbs, which were in a continual state of spasticity. He proved an excellent subject for hypnosis, becoming a somnambulist. He has now lost his spasticity, and his tremors have disappeared. At the time of writing he no longer dreams, the nightmares have disappeared, and he is well enough to return home to his work. A very interesting case was that of E. C., aged 37, officers' steward, who came complaining of neuritis. On examination, however, I found that he was completely anaesthetic from head to foot, so that I could stick pins into him anywhere over the body. He won for himself in the ward the nickname of the "living pin-cushion." I could not help regretting that he did not require to have his appendix removed, for the operation could have been done painlessly without further anaesthetic! We have in this man a case of "hysterical" anaesthesia, produced, as I interpret it, as an expression of his protective instinct in order to ward off the "slings of fortune." In his desire to avoid hurt of any kind, he has quite unconsciously become anaesthetic. His case is very interesting as another instance of the power of the mind to cancel the incoming sensations. I have managed to dispel his neuritis and cure his shakiness, by mental suggestion, but, up to the present, even under deep hypnosis, I have not managed to restore his sensation of pain, and the conditions of service prevent my proceeding further with the case.

The only conclusion we can draw from these cases is that "shell shock," in spite of all its physical symptoms of paralysis, etc., is primarily a mental rather than a nervous disease. Psychologists are therefore at the present time seeking for the explanation of these lesions. The matter is still under investigation, but the following view seems most in keeping with what is known of such conditions.

Those acquainted with psychotherapy are familiar with the theory that neuroses and psychoses can be caused by suppressed emotion. When a woman is oppressed with grief even her next-door neighbour knows that it is much better for her to "have a good cry" than to suppress her grief. Suppressed emotions are like suppressed steam, and often lead to disaster in insanity and the asylum. An old lady I know lost her husband by death, and at the time showed no grief at the loss, but two days afterwards began to have delusions that the rest of the family were going to be taken from her, and subsequently she had to be put under restraint. The theologian knows that unless the sin is confessed it produces a depressed and brooding disposition like that of Cain in the traditional story, who seems to have started with a melancholia and ended with the aimless, restless wandering of mania. When the sin is confessed the sinner at once feels himself a new man, the sky clears, and the spirit is liberated because the suppressed emotion has been let loose. Most of us have had the uncomfortable feeling of having "something on our mind" which makes us worry and feel restless. As soon, however, as we look for the cause and bring it into consciousness, the restlessness disappears. This principle we apply to shell shock. The soldier on the field of battle, the sailor mine-sweeping at sea, are constantly in a state of extreme tension. The natural expression of fear is to turn and run in flight. These men suppress that natural impulse: nothing will induce them to give way to fear: grim determination is written upon their faces. But their very courage is a danger to them. Gunpowder is the more dangerous when it is packed tight and closely confined; so, too, with the instinctive emotions. The soldier succeeds in suppressing his fear, but that very suppression makes an explosion the more dangerous. A sudden bursting of a high explosive stuns him for a moment, and deprives him of his power

of control; and in that moment the pent-up emotion bursts forth. When he comes to himself he finds that he has completely lost the reins, his grip over himself has gone, his self-mastery has given way, and he falls a victim to these symptoms of paralysis, or of general tremors, characteristic of the cases of "shell shock." It is thus often the bravest men, those who have been most successful in mastering and suppressing their fear, that fall victims to this disease. It is not maintained that *all* cases of "shell shock" can be explained in this way: many cases may be due to a complex of causes. But it seems clear that the above is the cause in many cases of the disease, and a contributory cause in others.

I think these cases I have cited will be sufficient to convince the reader of the extraordinary power of the mind over the body, and to compel us to the conclusion that, however much the body and its sensations may modify mental conditions, the mind is the predominant factor in the life of the individual.

Christian Science

In the popular mind the subject of Mental Healing is so commonly confused with the claims of Christian Science that a few words on this subject will not be out of place. That many of the cures of Christian Scientists are authentic I have no doubt. Convinced as I am of the power of mind over body, I should be surprised if it were not the case. But I am equally convinced that the philosophy or "religion" on which it is based is false. I am antecedently inclined to believe the lady who told me that she had suffered from nervousness and was troubled with aches and pains shifting from place to place about her body, and that she was cured by believing in the Christian Science doctrine that "God was All, and that, pain and evil being illusion, she must be healthy and have no pains."

But when a man tells me that he broke his leg, and after treatment by Christian Science was immediately cured, his statement is so entirely contrary to all that is scientifically known about the body, that it would require overwhelming evidence to convince me that, assuming the person to be telling the truth, this was not a mistake in diagnosis. Even if he tells me that the fracture was diagnosed as such by a medical man I should still be unconvinced, for even the best of surgeons make mistakes on such matters. To take another illustration. If a man's arm is paralysed by "shell shock," in which there is no lesion of the nerve-trunk, but where the function alone is at fault owing to some blockage, I can conceive that a discharge of energy from the mind, whether by the religious emotion fomented by Christian Science, or by Suggestion under Hypnosis, may break down the block, and so suddenly and immediately restore the function. But when a patient comes to me with his nerve-trunk severed by a bullet, I do not believe that any amount of suggestion or of faith will mend the lesion, and I assure him that it will be at least some months before his arm regains its power and sensation. This is the radical distinction between the Christian Scientist and the Psychotherapist: it is based on a fundamental difference between an organic lesion like a ruptured nerve, and a functional lesion such as we find in the cases of patients suffering from "shell shock" to which I have already referred.

At the same time, I am quite prepared to admit that Mental Healing may very favourably influence even organic lesions. We have already shown what effect mental suggestion may have on blood supply. But the speedy restoration of bodily tissue is very largely dependent on blood supply. It is quite obvious, therefore, that the process of healing can be accelerated in a marked degree by increasing the blood supply under mental suggestion. Again, healing is greatly aided by the abolition of pain, so that, if the mind can abolish

pain, it will materially aid in curing organic disease. Pain is a very valuable aid in the detection of physical maladies: it waves the red flag to warn us that disease is about to make an onslaught on our bodies, so that we, being forewarned, may also be forearmed. But its proper task is then complete. If it continues to wave its flag and inflict constant and severe suffering, it becomes a positive danger. Following the suggestions of other hypnotists I have performed this interesting experiment: I inflicted two burns on the arms of a hypnotised subject. In the one case I suggested that the pain should disappear, and it did so; in the other I allowed the burn to be normally painful. It was found that the painless burn healed with much greater rapidity than the other. This clearly indicates that, after a certain point, pain acts as a deterrent to rapid healing; and the abolition of pain by suggestion may therefore aid considerably in the cure even of organic diseases. But in both illustrations, whether in the regulation of the blood supply, or in the abolition of pain, the effect that the mind has in healing the body is an indirect one, and has no relation to such a case as the sudden knitting of broken bones which the credulity of the Christian Scientist permits him to believe possible.

Now, what is the significance of Mental Healing? It is that by the influence of the spoken word we have been able to drive away physical pain, control physical movements which have become uncontrolled, bring back power to limbs afflicted with palsy. Physical symptoms have been cured by psychical causes, thus demonstrating the mastery of the mind over the body. In other words, we have in the mind an energy which acts not only in its own sphere of mental life, but flows over and floods the arid clods of the physical plains to produce health and gladness.

Telepathy

Having pointed out that we have real evidence that the mind can dominate the body and all its functions, let us now consider certain evidence which suggests that the mind can act without using the ordinary channels of bodily sense.

Just as the pursuit of Astrology brought to light facts which laid the foundation of the science of Astronomy, so the pursuit of Spiritualism has brought to light facts of thought-transference or Telepathy. These have already given rise to a certain amount of scientific investigation, and will be more thoroughly investigated in the future.

Only the briefest indication of their nature can be given in this place; but some further illustration will be found in Essay VII. of this volume. Probably the subject first forced itself to the front owing to the frequently recorded cases of "wraiths" appearing at the time of death. Many of us have personal experience of having the thought of some person obtruded on our mind, and have discovered later that this person died at that moment, or passed through some extraordinary experience. The image of the person is flashed across our mind, perhaps visualised. I should hold myself that, if visualised, the appearance is a hallucination, the result of a subjective impression. This states very concisely the difference between the theory of Telepathy and that of Spiritualism.

The Spiritualist seems to believe that the spirit of the departed is in the room and manifests himself in some actual form, but a more reasonable theory is that the impression is purely subjective, and due to Telepathy from the dying person. It is to be noted that in several of the best-authenticated of these stories of apparitions of the dying, the death takes place in India or Africa, and the recipient is in England. In

the *Proceedings* of the S.P.R. many instances of exactly this class are recorded.[1]

The following account by Dr. Leonard Guthrie, relates the experience of a credible witness, E. W. M., a distinguished scientist and F.R.S. In his own words he writes[2]:—

"When I lived in Canada, the following case occurred: an Englishman and an American clubbed together to try to reach the Klondyke goldfield by the overland trail, *i.e.*, by going due north from the prairies, instead of following the usual course of crossing by the Canadian Pacific Railway to Vancouver, then taking steamer up the coast to Sitka, and crossing back over the mountains via White Horse Pass. After the pair had passed on their journey what the American judged to be the outposts of civilisation, he shot the Englishman while he lay asleep, tried to destroy the body by burning it, rifled his baggage, taking everything of value, and returned. When he was questioned as to what had become of his companion, he replied that he (the American) had become discouraged and had given up the expedition, but that the Englishman had pushed on. But there was an encampment of Indians close to the spot where the crime had been committed. The old chief saw two men come north and encamp in the night, he heard a shot and saw one man go south. He went to the camp, saw the body, and informed the nearest post of N.W. Mounted Police. They trailed the murderer, and arrested him before he could escape across the U.S. border. He was brought to Regina. Meanwhile, the brother of the murdered man, in England, had a dream in which he saw his absent brother lying dead and bloody on the ground. He came down next morning very depressed, told his dream, and announced his intention

[1] For a case that has just come under my own notice, cf. p. 74, Note B.

[2] Extract from "Dreams and their Interpretation," by Sir Robert Armstrong-Jones, M.D., F.R.C.P., F.R.C.S., in *The Practitioner*.

of going straight out to Canada to see if anything had happened to his brother. He arrived out as the trial of the murderer was progressing. He identified several articles in the possession of the murderer as the property of his late brother. The murderer was hanged at Regina."

Such instances are comparatively common, and if they do not convince the sceptic they at least afford sufficient ground for scientific investigation. There must be some cause for these phenomena, and if they are not due to telepathy then it is just as necessary to explain in some other way the psychology of such mental aberrations.

In a series of séances arranged by the Society for Psychical Research, with Mrs. Piper as medium, the investigators sought to obtain an account of a certain conversation which took place between Mrs. Sidgwick and Mr. F. W. H. Myers, some time before his death. This conversation was known to none except to the two participants. In her trance Mrs. Piper claimed to have access to "Myers," and an attempt was made to induce the spirit of "Myers" to reproduce the conversation through Mrs. Piper. As long as Mrs. Sidgwick was absent and did not come into contact with Mrs. Piper, the medium failed to reproduce the conversation. When, however, Mrs. Sidgwick came into contact with Mrs. Piper, there was a remarkable, though not perfectly accurate, account given of the conversation. That is to say, it was the proximity of Mrs. Sidgwick, who *knew the conversation*, that made the difference. Mrs. Sidgwick, therefore, concludes, and rightly so in my opinion, that the medium became possessed of the information, not from the spirit of "Myers," but by mental transference from Mrs. Sidgwick herself. In other words, though it did not prove communication with the spirit world it did afford important evidence of telepathy.

The subject needs patient and thorough investigation. Are we to assume that there is a psychic ether

pervading space in the same way as that material ether which the scientist assumes to be omnipresent; or are we to believe in the theory of "brain waves," by which the activity of one brain is transferred to another brain, as the air conveys waves of sound from one man's voice to the ear of another man; or, as a third possibility, is the mind altogether free from the limitations of time and space, and does it thus possess the power of presenting itself to two persons at once, possibly at remote parts of the earth?

On the one hand, experiments in telepathy, *e.g.*, those conducted at Brighton, and quoted by Podmore in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, have shown that more successes are obtained when the person giving and the person receiving the message are in the same room, which suggests that distance does have an influence on the transmission of thought. On the other hand, the fact that messages have been transferred from one hemisphere to another, from Canada to England, suggests that the process of transference is independent of space and time and that it is concerned, therefore, with mind itself. It is difficult to conceive how brain waves, the very name of which suggests a material medium, can overcome the obstacle of continents and penetrate a brain in the uttermost parts of the earth, and to do so with sufficient force to rise into consciousness.

Whatever the explanation, however, it is safe to say that in telepathy we have an indication that the mind is much less circumscribed by the limitations of the material body than is ordinarily supposed.

III. Study of the Biological Development of the Mind (*a*) in the Individual and (*b*) in the Race, pointing to the Gradual Ascendancy of the Mind over the Body

We now pass to another line of argument. In the preceding section we have been examining the mind

of man as we know it in its present state of evolution. This investigation has shown us the mind dominating the body, having the power to abolish its sensations, to cure its ills and, liberating itself, in a sense, from the brain, to communicate with other minds at a distance from it.

We have now to look at the mind biologically, as it passes from its low and humble origin to attain that position of mastery which it now possesses. This study will convince us that in its earlier stages the function of the mind is largely passive in the sense that it has always to await the impact of some external physical stimulus, and has no power of initiation in itself: but in its later stages the mind is found to acquire more and more the power of initiating action, and seems to be on the way to becoming master of itself and of its own destinies.

This development I shall trace both in the individual and in the race. In reality the development is analogous in both cases, for the individual passes through the stages of evolution that the race has passed through, from the speck of protoplasm from which each of us originated to our present state of growth and intelligence.

(*a*) *In the Individual*

First, then, I shall trace briefly the evolution of vision and of the emotions in the individual in order to draw attention to that point in evolution where the physical surrenders its rights to the sovereignty of the mind.

The development of Vision furnishes us with an excellent example of this change.

The new-born child possesses the whole apparatus of vision—cornea, lens, retina, optic nerve and tracts, and centres of vision in the brain. But the child does not see, and has as yet no sense of vision. For the development of that sense external stimuli are

necessary: the child must open its eyes and let the rays from objects around, from its toys, its mother, or the lamp, fall upon its retina and be conveyed to its brain, where they produce an appropriate sensation. These external stimuli, we repeat, are necessary to sight: without them there would be no sense of vision. In short, the mental representation is dependent upon physical sensations.

But this does not remain so always. Look at the child a few years later. The sensations have meanwhile been stored as memories, combined to acquire meanings, associated for the building up of visions that "eye hath not seen." This power of calling up new visions we call "imagination": it is quite independent of external stimulus. Indeed imagination is more vivid when these stimuli are cut off. Consequently we shut our eyes when we wish to image anything, and seers receive their visions in the dark watches of the night.

In the highest examples we have the genius of the artist, poet, and philosopher, each of whom expresses in his own plastic material of words or of pigment the creations of his imagination. The balance has now turned: mental representation is altogether independent of physical stimuli, and the mind can initiate its own objects of imagination. Indeed we may go a step further and we find that imagination can become so vivid that it deceives the senses into believing that the imaged objects are actually present. This we term hallucination. The functions have been reversed and the mind is now creating the sensations. The development of vision, then, shows us the transference of initiative from the periphery, namely the bodily sensation, to the mind at the centre.

The Emotions.—The second illustration we take is that of the emotions. Readers of James's *Psychology* are familiar with the theory there enunciated, that the emotions are the result of bodily movement.

"The bodily changes follow directly the perception

of the exciting fact, and our feeling of the same changes as they occur *is* the emotion. Common sense says we lose our fortune, are sorry and weep : we meet a bear, are frightened and run : we are insulted by a rival, are angry and strike." In contrast to that James holds that "we feel sorry because we cry, angry because we strike, afraid because we tremble."

In this account of the emotions we have the direct assertion that the mental states of emotion are dependent on physical movements, and therefore subordinated to them. We need have no hesitation in accepting this theory, provided that it is intended to account only for the origin and early development of the emotions. Darwin, in his fascinating book on the *Expression of the Emotions*, has shown the physiological purpose of emotional expressions, which seems to prove their physiological origin. The scowl expressive of anger is the vestige of the setting of the brow assumed by an animal before charging a hostile animal. The sneer which exhibits the canine teeth is all that remains of the fierce threat of the wolf to devour. I have myself often seen South Sea Islanders express disgust of others by turning their back on them and lifting one leg in the manner of the dog. We are therefore quite justified in admitting the truth of this evidence, and in accepting the theory that the emotions originated in physical movements which serve a physiological purpose, so long as it relates to the origin and development, and not to the present state, of our emotions. These movements, originally expressing physiological functions, have now assumed a new meaning, having attained a mental significance which has obliterated the traces of their physiological origin. In the development of the emotions there comes the time, corresponding to that we have noted in the case of vision, when the movement no longer creates the emotion, though it may suggest it, but is itself produced by the emotion. The balance of power has changed from the physical to the

mental, so that the physical actions which originally produced the emotions (as James has told us) are now merely the expressions of those emotions. This conclusion is in keeping with the judgment of common sense and of introspection. It is embodied in ordinary language; the word e-motion suggests a motion from within outward, a movement originated in the mind and expressing itself in physical activity. Thus we now knit our brow because we are angry; we show our teeth in order to express a threat; smile because we feel pleasure; and run away because we are frightened. In short, while mental emotion originated in physical movements, the balance has now turned and the mind now initiates these movements and uses them as modes of expression.

The process which we have illustrated in the individual, by which vision and emotion have liberated themselves from the domination of the body, is also found to be at work in the biological evolution of the race. Here, too, we can trace the process by which the mind grows from being a puny parasite of the body to become its master and lord.

(*b*) *In the Race*

In tracing the *biological development of the mind in the race* I cannot, in the space at my disposal, even mention all the varied stages through which it passes. It is possible only to touch on the more important ones, but these will suffice for our argument.

My purpose in outlining these stages is to trace the gradually increasing ascendancy of the mind from its humble origin, a weakling, dependent for its every movement on the body, until it attains the full vigour of mindhood which subdues the parent from which it sprang, and makes the body its slave.

In the earliest forms of animal life, and even in some forms of plant life, we find what *appears* to be

evidence of mental activity, in that their actions seem to exhibit an intelligent purpose. When the sensitive plant is touched, its leaves curl up and droop, as though to withdraw themselves from danger. The Venus Fly-trap, which closes its petals over the fly and traps it, appears to possess more wit and cunning than its hapless victim. The single-celled amoeba, the earliest form of animal life, puts forth its pseudopodia or prolongations and, encircling a morsel of food, seizes and absorbs it. All these organisms, although devoid of any nervous system, perform movements which so simulate purposive actions that the casual observer is apt to jump to the conclusion that they are endowed with mental power.

But are we justified in concluding that these early forms of life exhibit mental power: can we say that they possess intelligence?

From the philosophical point of view it is maintained that the fact that their actions are directed towards useful ends, suggests that a mind must be at work. The philosopher will argue that these actions cannot be explained except by postulating a guiding and directing force which is essentially intelligent and purposive. This, however, does not mean that these creatures have minds in the individual sense, nor that they possess the power of initiation with themselves as centre. I, personally, agree with the views of the philosopher, and believe in the existence of the "cosmic mind" which dwells in all living things and works out its purposes in them; but, as scientists, it is better that we should not accept this as a postulate and argue from it as fact, until we find some scientific and empirical evidence of the presence of mind in these low forms of life. Looked at from the scientific point of view there are several facts which make us hesitate to affirm that these primitive forms of life have minds. In the first place, their actions are of a mechanical nature whereby we can predict with certainty what their movements will be. If you touch the Venus Fly-trap it will close its petals,

quite irrespective of whether the stimulus is a fly which it can eat or a bit of wood. In other words, it acts without discrimination : its action is purely mechanical. Similarly, in an animal like the mollusc, action is purely reflex, so that when you apply any irritant you can always predict with certainty that it will respond in a particular way. In the case of the amoeba, the mechanical nature of its movements have been demonstrated in an experiment devised by Professor Schafer, which reproduces these movements in a globule of olive-oil under conditions which exclude the possibility of mental interference.[1]

We cannot, therefore, claim that as yet we have conclusive proof of a mind in these early forms of life, except perhaps in the vague sense of a mind general and diffuse, pervading all living things, and expressing its power and purpose through them. We often hear it said that a musician "makes his violin speak," his piano "live." They are not living, but they are the vehicle of a mind behind. In this sense we can perhaps say that these primitive creatures possess a mind. But they possess a mind only in a passive sense ; they contain it rather than possess it.[2]

Let us pass to a higher stage in the development of mind, in which we find a *store of nerve energy*.

If we destroy the brain of a frog and then touch its belly with acid, it will lift its leg and make movements to scratch off the acid. This is a purely reflex action, and acts with that mechanical certainty which seems to exclude the working of an intelligence. But further,

[1] "Take on a glass rod a drop of ordinary olive-oil which has been coloured with Scharlach R., and place it gently on the surface of a 1 per cent solution of sodium bicarbonate." The result observed is that the olive-oil sends out prolongations, and performs movements almost identical with those of the amoeba. This, however, is purely a phenomenon of surface tension.

[2] It is only right to state that, whereas I have maintained the generally accepted view of scientific men on this question, there is a growing opinion among scientists, that even in these very early forms of life there are the manifestations of mental activity and intelligence. Were such a view to become accepted I need hardly point out that the general conclusion I am arguing for would be further strengthened, but I prefer not to assume more than the evidence would be generally admitted to prove.

let the leg be restrained from movement, and the brainless creature will lift the other leg to perform the same service. This looks, at first sight, as if the animal, realising that one action was frustrated, devised another action to perform the same service, and, in doing so, showed purposive intelligence. This, however, would be going beyond our premisses. He would be a bold man who would affirm that a brainless frog has a mind. This experiment, however, does take us one stage higher. In order to perform this action, reflex as it is, we must assume that the creature has a store of nerve energy. When this source of energy finds the normal channel of outflow closed, it expends itself by passing down another : denied access to one leg, it discharges its force down the motor nerve of the other leg which moves towards the irritated point on the belly. We have here, then, a new factor which distinguishes this "reflex" frog from the amoeba and lower forms of life, namely, its power to store up nerve energy. It has not, however, the power possessed by the normal frog and all higher animals of determining at will into which channel that store of nerve force shall be directed.

The next stage is the all-important one, from our point of view, since it introduces the psychic element, and presents us with phenomena which can be explained only in terms of mental life. The organism now develops along two paths which are associated together.

(1) On the sensory side, the organism now possesses the power of recognising the sensations which come to it—in other words, it develops *Consciousness.*

(2) On the motor side, the organism has the power of directing its reserve store of nerve energy in any direction in accordance with its own desires towards carrying out its purposes and fulfilling its aims—in other words, it develops a *Will.*

In both Consciousness and Will we have phenomena which the laws of Physiology entirely fail to explain,

and which Psychology alone can even attempt to elucidate.

(1) *Consciousness* is the sensation of psychic states. When we speak of being "conscious" of any sensation we mean that by some means we become "aware" of it. Let us realise that there are millions of sensations which never rise to consciousness; impressions that do not impress our mind sufficiently to make us "aware" of them. Such, for instance, are the "sensations" of normal digestion, breathing, or the secretion of glands. These functions are always sending impressions up to the higher centres, but, under normal conditions, they do not produce consciousness of their movements. They become conscious only when these organs are disturbed and their functions upset, in which case we may be very painfully "aware" of them. But let us pause for a moment. What do we mean when we say that we are "aware"? What is it to be "aware"? Who is it that is conscious? We have, in using these terms, taken a great stride: we have, in fact, *passed from physiological to psychical terms.* In using such words as "aware" we are using terms for which we can find no physiological substitute. We have, in fact, entered the realm of "mind," a sphere into which physiology cannot enter and in which it cannot live. Like the fish which cannot breathe in the open air, physiology pants and expires in its efforts to follow the mind into the psychic region; the atmosphere is too rarefied: thought is too ethereal to be grasped by it. In short, physiology has to abandon this field to psychology.

In the earlier stages physiology may, with some reason, claim to explain the phenomena presented. It can trace the stimulus as it passes round the reflex arc, up the sensory nerve, across the synapse or junction, and down the motor nerve. This acts with the same mechanical certainty as the touching of an electric button at one end of a wire produces the ringing of a bell at the other end. But when we come to consciousness,

physiology fails to satisfy us, because we are dealing with something that is different *in kind* from nerve energy. We may make use of our last illustration (remembering that it is only an analogy, and at best only explains the mechanism of consciousness) to make clear this difference. An ordinary current of electricity produces heat in a wire—such is the normal mechanism of nerve energy as illustrated in reflex action. But let this current pass through a filament of exceptional refinement, and be raised to a greater intensity, and the heat will be transformed into light. Consciousness is thus a phenomenon of intensification : it is produced when our sensations are raised to a sufficiently high pitch of tension. It is due to mental friction : to the effort to cut a new channel through the brain. Heat and light may both be produced by the transmission of a current of electricity along an electric wire : they may, from the physical point of view, differ only in the length of their waves and in velocity. But the essential feature of our analogy, imperfect as it is, is that in its resultant expression light is a *different form of energy from heat*, and therefore stimulates an entirely different system of nerve-endings in our bodies. Consciousness is thus a different form of energy from nerve energy, though it may have arisen out of it ; it is, in fact, psychic energy, which it is impossible to describe in terms of the physical.

This dramatic leap from the physiological to the psychical is the most important factor in the evolution of mind. It is the decisive factor which once and for all turns the balance and establishes the supremacy of the mind over the body. This is that reversal of power which we have already illustrated in the faculty of vision and in the emotions, both of which were born of sensory impulses but grew to become psychic powers by throwing off the yoke of the flesh.

Henceforward the mind begins to live a life independent of the body. The tulip springs from a bulb,

and in its early stages derives all its sustenance from the store of food in the bulb. But when its leaves are well established, and it has exhausted its store of nourishment, it begins to breathe in strength and force from the sunlight and air around, without which it would fade and wither and fail to produce the perfect flower. So mind can come to perfection only by turning to the light, and freely exercising its intellectual and aesthetic functions. The mind arises from the body and its sensations, but only in the sense that the dragon-fly springs from the grub which lives in the mud of a stagnant pool; its origin is humble but its life in the sunlight is a whirl of coloured brilliance and wanton liberty. This new form of energy which we call consciousness has a similar freedom and autonomy; it originated in physical sensations of the body, but has taken wing, breathes the airs of the etherial blue, and is nourished by spiritual food. Thus the mind has now as little in common with the sensations of the body from which it sprang, as this fiery, dazzling creature has with the slime-covered grub.

Let us, then, note the significance of this change. The mind has now the power to choose its own food, because it knows what it is getting. This truth we have illustrated in the individual by the power possessed by the mind to refuse sensations offered to it and to produce a psychic blindness and psychic deafness. The results of this are very far-reaching from the point of view of our mental and spiritual development. "Take heed what (or how) ye hear," said the Master, realising that it is in the power of man to respond or not to the appeals of sense made to him. There are other ways of resisting the voices of the sirens than the crude method of stuffing the ears with wax; the mind may refuse to listen. St. Paul follows up the injunction of the Master by encouraging us to think only of "whatsoever things are beautiful and of good report," realising that the mind is capable of seeking the best

things, by which alone it can develop and fulfil its highest life.

(2) *The Development of the Will.* — Hitherto we have dealt with the new stage in the biology of the mind in so far as it affects the *sensory* side in the development of consciousness. We have now to study it on the *motor* side, and to discuss the power of the mind to react as it wills to sensations in order either to annul or to reinforce any tendencies to action. Let us compare this stage with the foregoing. In the case of reflex action, as in the occipitated frog, we could always predict that the animal would perform certain movements in response to certain irritation. With the advent of will we cannot so predict action. The normal frog, for instance, if touched with acid may scratch itself, may shrink into itself, or may jump away, and we can never say which it will choose to do. Again, in the "reflex" animal the greater the stimulus the greater is the reaction : the stronger the acid the more violently will the frog scratch : the more a child is annoyed the more vigorously does it cry. But the adult man or woman in whom the mind is fully developed can either inhibit or reinforce the tendency to any particular action.

A man may be beaten with many stripes, and not raise a finger in protest ; for he is exercising another power than that of reflex action, the power of mental inhibition or self-restraint. On the other hand, incoming sensations may be greatly *reinforced* by the mind, producing a more violent motor reaction. No casual observer, for instance, would have understood why, in a certain episode, the dangling of a bit of string by a 'bus conductor should have produced such wild fury in the driver of the 'bus behind. The grim humour of the situation was, however, revealed and the fury accounted for, when the conductor explained his little joke—the driver's father was being hanged that morning. The stimulus of a bit of string was quite insufficient in itself

to produce the reaction ; but it was reinforced by the mind which grasped the sinister meaning, and let loose stores of energy which turned the driver's face purple and the air blue.

These illustrations will convince us that the adult mind does not react mechanically nor proportionately to any incoming sensation, but has the power either to react vigorously or to exert an inhibitory action in response to it. This implies that there must be a store of energy, a reservoir of nerve force, accumulated somewhere in the brain, which the mind can draw upon and can either withhold or expend in response to any given stimulus. This power we call the *Will.* The will is the power the mind possesses of directing as it desires the store of nerve energy to the accomplishment of its own ends. Contrast this with the lower forms of animal life already illustrated, which have a store of nerve energy, but which have not the power to direct that energy into any channel they will, but must necessarily discharge it down the most open or frequently used channel. For will two things are essential, both of which we have in the developed mind—a store of nerve energy and the capacity to direct that energy into any desired channel.

There may, however, be those who are still sceptical of the existence of a definite power we call the will, and who consider that the discharge of nerve energy to which we give that name can be accounted for by the purely mechanical workings of the law of association. In order to illustrate the difference between the law of association and the working of will, I would recommend such to try the simple experiment devised by Dr. McDougall of Oxford. Take a series of nonsense syllables, read them over a number of times in a casual, indifferent manner, and record how many repetitions are required to memorise accurately the whole series. In this case the memorising is brought about purely by the association of one syllable with another, the one mechanically calling up the other. Now repeat the experiment with

another series of nonsense syllables, but this time, instead of reading them indifferently, "set your mind" to it, directing your energies towards your object. It may surprise you to find that it now requires only some ten or twelve repetitions. Obviously, in this latter case, some new force has been added which is something different, and far more potent than mere association, and produces a very different result. This additional force is the will.

We may now summarise the stages of the evolution of the mind. There are, of course, countless other intermediate stages, but it is sufficient for us to have mentioned the most important:—

(1) In the first stage, that illustrated in the amoeba, we have as yet no conclusive proof of the presence of a mind, except perhaps in the sense of a pervading mind, passive and impersonal, a part of the cosmic mind working in and through the primitive creature.

(2) In the second stage, we have the animals which possess a nervous system, whose actions are controlled by the flow of nerve energy or neurokyme.

(3) In the third stage, we have those animals in which incoming sensations have developed a centre for sensations, the central nervous system, where nerve energy is stored, and from which it is discharged by regularly constituted channels, and in response to specially strong stimuli.

(4) In the final stage, sensations are raised to a high pitch of intensity, and in some unknown way produce a psychic form of energy we call consciousness. In this stage, also, the organism not only has a store of nerve energy, but possesses the power of directing that energy at will into any channel which leads to the fulfilment of its conscious purposes.

In the will, as in consciousness, we have a new element in the evolution of the life, the development of a *force which can dominate brain processes*. It is an autonomy, controlling the nervous system, and

regulating the functions of the mind. It is a psychic force which from its place of authority can direct the stores of nerve force, now into this channel, and now into that, by a power of choice which no physiological law, and, indeed, no psychological law, can explain or predict.

The body thus appears to have produced what it can no longer control, nor even understand ; and evolution has brought forth the flower and glory of its age-long development.

Beyond this stage of mental evolution it is not necessary to go, because we have now crossed the great gulf between the physiological and the psychical, and have set our feet firmly on that shore where the higher faculties of the mind, reason and abstract thought, are subsequently developed. These higher powers serve only to point us still further along the road that delivers us from bondage to the flesh, and leads us to anticipate the complete emancipation of the mind from the body. The mind may henceforth become indifferent to the disasters which in the course of nature are bound to overtake the body, and may hope to survive its destruction and decay—and perhaps thereafter to find or create for itself a "spiritual body" adapted to a different sphere of existence and to other modes of life.[1]

This brings to an end our examination, from the scientific point of view, of the relation of body and mind with special reference to the possibility of the mind surviving the destruction of the body. The survey is necessarily incomplete. We have, for instance, omitted altogether the question as to the nature of matter. An increasing number of scientists are devoting themselves to this problem, and they tell us that matter is not that solid, indestructible thing we take it to be, but consists of ions vibrating at an extraordinary velocity. It will

[1] Cf. Essay III. pp. 103 ff.

be extremely dramatic if science proves that matter is after all only a function of some invisible force. This and other similar subjects I have been compelled to omit from this short study.

I do not pretend that the evidence I have brought forward amounts to *proof* that the mind survives the destruction of the body. I have merely attempted to show, in the first place, that it is credible, and not contradictory to the teaching of science as we know it at the present day; and, secondly, that it is not only not contradictory to science, but that science points to this supremacy and liberation of the mind as the goal towards which nature is working. It is only reasonable to assume that the process which has been at work during the whole of biological history will be continued to its logical conclusion.

For the present, therefore, so far as science is concerned, life after the grave is not a proved fact, but the evidence is sufficient to justify faith in it. Such "faith" is often looked upon as a specifically religious function, and suggests to the casual observer a process of "swallowing" what is incredible. Far from that being the case, faith is a function which the scientist employs constantly and without which he could not conduct his investigations. "Faith" is merely the religious counterpart of the "hypothesis" of the scientist. He is bound to assume as a hypothesis the law of gravity, and other mighty assumptions which he has not proved; but, having assumed any such hypothesis, he finds that the facts of the universe as he knows them fit so perfectly into it that he is confirmed in his belief in the legitimacy of his hypothesis. Precisely the same process is employed by the religious man who assumes the truth of belief in God and in immortal life. Having accepted these hypotheses, he finds that they explain so many of the deep problems of the world that his faith in them is confirmed. Since, therefore, the facts of science, which we have been

studying, seem rather to confirm than to contradict the hypothesis of a life beyond death, the religious man is acting only reasonably when he accepts the belief as an article of his faith.

I have, in the preceding discussion, tried to keep within the bounds of scientific fact. It remains with other contributors to this book to discuss these problems from the religious and philosophical point of view. I may be permitted, however, to trespass on their domain to the extent of suggesting the broad conclusions to which I feel myself drawn. We have looked upon the emancipation of the soul from the body as a process of evolution. This emancipation we may therefore assume to be the purpose of our existence on this earth. Before our birth we were undifferentiated "soul"; we were parts of the "cosmic mind," we were as water drawn in a pitcher from the "mind pool." Our destiny is to grow personalities out of the raw material with which we began life. In every stage of evolution it is only the few who progress, the many remain unevolved. So it may be in the passage from the physical to the spiritual.

Readers of Ibsen's *Peer Gynt* will remember that when the prodigal returned from his wanderings he encountered the "Button Moulder." The Moulder informed him in reply to his enquiries that he had never developed an individuality, his life had been too pithless to entitle him to any reward, for he was neither good enough for Heaven, nor bad enough for Hell. His fate would therefore be to be boiled down again in the same melting-pot as Tom, Dick, and Hal, and so form raw material again. Such may be the destiny of those who never pass upwards. They have never grown personalities; they have not even become individuals in the highest sense; they have, therefore, failed in the main purpose of their lives. They were intended to gain the mastery over their senses and develop minds capable of dominating the body. Instead, even to the

end, they are completely under the mastery of their senses, in which they find their only joy. These profane persons, like Esau, sell their birthright for a mess of pottage. What will happen to them? Since they have chosen not to develop that "soul" with which they were endowed into personalities in touch with the eternal, their end may be to pass back again into the melting-pot to be boiled down with the rest (for the Master of the Universe wastes nothing): they merely return to that nonentity from which they came: from them may be taken away even that individuality which they have.

But there are those, too, who fulfil their destiny. They, too, were drawn out of the "mind pool" before their individual life began, and were thrown into this material world to turn the soul substance into a living personality realising and fulfilling the purpose of their Maker. This is nature's way always: to transform the simple and undifferentiated into the complex and highly developed. What are the essential conditions by which the personality passes from the terrestrial to the immortal life? These will be differently stated according to the philosophy, creed, or Church to which we adhere. In all true religions and philosophies there is the turning away from evil and wrong to all that is right and good in the belief that it is only truth and beauty and love that are real and eternal. Herein the intuition of the seer goes beyond the conclusions of empirical science, but it in no wise contradicts them, for it is only travelling a little further along the same road.

We may conclude, then, that before our lives began we were each parts of the "world soul" without separate consciousness, and without distinct individuality, that our lives were offspring of the universal life and that by interaction with other lives, with material things, and with God, we are capable of developing souls free and undetermined, and capable of immortal

life. Our destiny is, that from the undeveloped soul with which we started we shall become ever more differentiated and more spiritual, in touch with the Infinite, knowing and loving God. The world soul from which we are derived came from God, and we go to God who is our Eternal Home. Meanwhile it is our business on earth so to live that we shall prepare ourselves for the time when body and brain decay but

> When that which drew from out the boundless deep
> Turns again home.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

A (cf. p. 32). Since this Essay has been in type I have myself succeeded in producing blisters by suggestion alone on three different occasions—the first time unexpectedly, the other times under strictly scientific conditions, the experiment being witnessed by another medical man, besides the hypnotist, and the patient being closely watched to avoid any possibility of fraud.

B (cf. p. 54). On the morning of August 14 a patient of mine announced to his ward doctor that he was very troubled by a dream that his brother was killed in France. On Tuesday, August 21, he told me he had again dreamed this and was very troubled. On August 24 I received word from the patient's father asking me to break the news to the son that his brother had died as the result of wounds received in action on August 14. His last letter home, written when he was quite well, was dated August 13. I may add that when the patient told me of his dream on the 21st another surgeon was present, and I said to this surgeon, as well as to another who was not present, that we would take note of it and see if it corresponded with fact. The doctor of the ward also confirms the story of the dream a week previously, so that the whole account rests on very firm evidence. I have the signatures of these surgeons as witnesses.

III

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

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III

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

The Proof of Immortality

Great men are greater than the arguments they use. Their insight into the reality of things often transcends what they can justify by logic. Plato, Zoroaster, the philosophers of India, the Taoist sages of China, to say nothing of outstanding thinkers of more recent date—men divided from one another by race, temperament, epoch, and civilisation—have all agreed, though on very diverse grounds, in looking for some kind of life beyond the grave. Their arguments may often fail to convince, but the fact of their broad general agreement is an impressive one. It is not to the pigmies of our race that we owe the persistence of the belief in immortality; nor is it the mark of a moral weakling to value or desire it.

Not the least impressive feature in this list is the fact that there can be included in it the name of Jesus Christ. A life beyond and better than the present was one of the things which He most valued and about which He was most sure. The precise degree of authority to be attributed to His views is a matter on which at the present day opinions vary immensely; but the absolute conviction on a point of this fundamental importance of one whom few will estimate as less than the world's supreme religious genius is a fact which cannot lightly be dismissed.

But however we may estimate the precise weight to be attached to the mere intuition of supreme genius, we have also, in the case of our Lord, to consider a clear summary statement of what He regarded as the main, if not the only, reason for His belief.

"As touching the dead, that they are raised; have ye not read in the book of Moses, in the place concerning the Bush, how God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Mk. xii. 26-27).

An appeal to a text of the Pentateuch does not at first sight seem at all convincing. The actual form, however, in which the argument is cast is due to its being addressed to a body of men who acknowledged no other authority; but a very little consideration shows that it is much more than a mere *argumentum ad hominem.* To say that God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is to say that He is a God who sets a supreme value on individual persons; and it is argued that the fact that God so values them is a guarantee that He cannot allow them to perish. It is essentially an argument from the character of God; and its point and cogency lies in the assertion that belief in immortality is a necessary deduction and consequence of a right belief in God.

The argument will repay a close examination. What is a right belief in God? What are its implications?

Man cannot conceive of the Infinite in His totality, but we feel that we must speak of God as *personal.* But when we ascribe personality to God we do not mean to imply that He has the limitations of personality as we know it but merely that personality—with its free self-determined life of thought and love and the delight in beauty—just because it is the highest thing we know, is that something from the analogy of which we can derive the *least inadequate* conception that is possible of the Divine. If we say that God is personal

we at least say something which is positive, something which, though short of being the whole truth, we know to be really true. To say that He is not personal is to imply that He is less than personal, and that we know to be untrue.

Within the conception of personality the Apostles' Creed singles out for emphasis two outstanding aspects of the Divine activity by styling Him Father and Creator. Father and Creator, when applied to God, must, like Person, be understood as instances of the highest activities known to our experience, taken as types of a higher and richer activity of the Divine to which these are the nearest and least misleading analogies we can find. To what, then, do they point? Let us for Father say Parent, for in God must be combined all and more than all we find in human Fatherhood and Motherhood in one. And for Creator may we not say Artist, to include all and more than all we mean by constructor, inventor, thinker, poet? God—Parent and Artist—what does this mean? Both analogies alike suggest one who brings into existence what otherwise would not have been. And in the case of God this bringing into existence cannot be thought of as a single act, but as a continual activity of giving, guiding, sustaining, and perfecting. But this is only half and not the most important half of what is meant. Artist and Parent are not mere workers or mere producers, however diligent, however able; they are above all things those who supremely value, though for different qualities and in a different way, that on which their care is lavished. In different ways they are two types of absolutely disinterested love—in the case of the artist of the vision he vainly endeavours to embody in his work, in the case of the parent of the living person whom he or she has been permitted to bring into being and to rear.

The human artist again and again destroys his work; but only when he feels it completely fails to embody

the vision. In the rare cases where he knows he has reached such relative success as is permitted to mankind, he would wish his work to last for ever—*exegi monumentum aere perennius*. Still more rarely can the human parent acquiesce in the extinction of a child—to those who really know and love it any human personality, however imperfect, has a value other and greater than that of the greatest work of art. Hence, if the personality of a human parent or of a human artist are dim reflections of elements in the character of the Divine (that is, unless we are prepared to say that the Infinite is in the last resort something less noble than ourselves) He must be above all things interested in the continual production of that which has supreme value —of value in ever new and ever higher forms, and no value which He has created can He lightly or willingly suffer to perish. Not merely the Conservation of Energy but the Conservation of Value, to use Höffding's famous phrase, nay, rather the Augmentation[1] of Value must be a principle of the Universe.

But, we must ask, would not this principle of the Conservation of Value, or even of the Augmentation of Value, be satisfied without assuming the immortality of the individual, so long as new and possibly ever better and richer forms of life were being continually created? Would not the assumption to the contrary prove too much? Would it not mean that the lily and the butterfly have immortal souls?

If God were thought of merely as the Artist, the continuance of the species with its continual rebirth of fresh lives to take the place of those who have deceased might perhaps suffice. But not if we think of Him as also Parent and Friend. The question resolves itself into this, at what point does individuality as such become a thing of absolute value? No two lilies, no two butterflies, are exactly the same, but, despite this fact, judged purely by aesthetic values, there is no

[1] Cf. *Concerning Prayer*, p. 6.

great loss when the lilies or the butterflies of one year have replaced those of the year before. Whether their individuality has a value other than aesthetic must depend in the last resort upon whether they have anything which we can reasonably call a conscious personality, or, in other words, a soul. So far as we can see they have not.

In the teaching of our Lord we seem to detect the suggestion of a hierarchy of values in the scale of life. There is the grass of the field which "God has so clothed"—it has supreme aesthetic value—but which to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the baker's furnace. There are the sparrows "not one of which falleth to the ground without your Father"—a phrase which suggests something more of individual care. And there is man, of whom it is said "ye are of more value than many sparrows," and "the very hairs of your head are numbered." We need not dogmatise as to the exact point in the scale of being at which there first appears a consciousness sufficiently individual to have a permanent value as such. There are some, for instance, who hold that phenomena like "race memory" and the instincts which compel the individual insect to sacrifice its own interests to those of the species, point either to the existence of an individual soul greater than can find expression in the physical constitution of the individual creature, or possibly to the existence of a corporate soul of the species to which the individual is related much as one's hand would be to one's self, if one could conceive of the attachment of the hand to the self as being of a purely psychic and not also of a physical nature. I hesitate to accept such speculations myself, but had they any foundation it would be conceivable that even vegetable life might be the expression of a hidden soul. If so, it is so effectively hidden that we can make no positive use of the hypothesis. But when we come to the higher animals the case is different. If love, loyalty, and capacity for unselfish devotion rather than

intellect be the test of "soul," few lovers of the dog would be disposed to deny that at least in some individuals, if not in whole species of the lower animals, there is latent and can be awakened something to which we cannot refuse the name "soul"—a rudimentary soul if you like, but, then, even among men are all souls equally advanced? Souls are not, like sixpences, material objects all of the same size. Whatever is sentient partakes of the nature of spirit, and the standard by which we measure spirit is not magnitude but quality. Dogs, at any rate some dogs, have at least an elementary sense of right and wrong. They know when they have done wrong, and are capable of shame. They may not understand the meaning of their offence, but they know they have offended against the will of a person higher than themselves whom they both love and fear. The attitude of a dog towards its master is very like that of the ancient Hebrew to his God. Perhaps the analogy may be pressed still further. It is often pointed out that this apparent "sense of sin" in animals appears to be confined to domestic animals, and it is argued that it is merely a result of their intercourse with man. Possibly—but is it therefore an illusion? Nothing stimulates the growth of conscience in man so much as willing service of and conscious fellowship with a Being infinitely higher than himself. Why should not relations with a master, made in the image of God, do for the dog what relation with God can do for the master? Indeed, it may *possibly*—I would not say more than "possibly"—be the case that animals have what is known as a "conditional" immortality, that is to say, that they survive as individuals only if they have, through contact with human beings, actually developed what would otherwise have been only a latent possibility and achieved something which we may call a soul or personality of a rudimentary kind. But if they have once achieved personality we may suppose it will still further develop, and that they might come to

play in the next life a part in the fellowship of souls analogous to that which little children play in this life.

But I should be unwilling to lay too much stress on the arguments which bear on the difficult and highly debatable question of animal survival. After all, to approach the problem of the quality and individual worth of life by first considering the vegetable, insect, or animal world, is to begin at the end about which we know least. The important thing to recognise is that at the other end of the scale of life, in the fully developed human being, we certainly have an individuality which is a thing of intrinsic value *as individual*. No two leaves of a tree are exactly alike, but no two brothers of a family are even approximately identical even though they may be twins physically almost indistinguishable. What constitutes the individuality of human beings is character—character possibly to some extent a thing innate but ever developing through conscious reaction towards circumstances, experiences, and especially through the infinitely subtle influences of personal relationships; and to any two individuals these must be infinitely diverse. If there are men of whom it must be said that it were "better had they not been born," it is probable that, unless in some way their characters can be revolutionised either in this world or the next, they will ultimately cease to have any real value to man or God and become extinct. But these, we believe, are exceptional cases. No one who has really loved another but feels that he has loved something which is unique and uniquely valuable.

There are many nowadays who urge that what we love is only that element in our friends which is divine and eternal, and that therefore it will suffice if we think of this element as destined to survive only as part of the Infinite Divine Life to be manifested again in higher achievements of personal existence. "Whether," writes Mr. Wells, "we live for ever or die to-morrow does not affect righteousness. Many people seem to find the

prospect of a final personal death unendurable. This impresses me as egotism. I have no such appetite for a separate immortality; what, of me, is identified with God, is God; what is not is of no more permanent value than the snows of yester-year."[1]

There is a note of idealism here; but it simply is not true to say that "it does not affect righteousness" whether we live for ever or die to-morrow. For if the Divine righteousness may lightly "scrap" the individual, human righteousness may do the same. The most conspicuous mark of the moral level of any community is the value it sets on human personality. The moral achievement of the individual may be measured largely by his readiness to sacrifice his own life for others, but the moral height of a society is shown by its reluctance to sacrifice even its least worthy members. The disinterestedness which is content with a Universe in which his own ego will soon cease to be is much to the credit of Mr. Wells; it would not be to God's credit were He equally content.

Weary and disillusioned with ourselves and with the world, there are times when most of us cease to desire a future life and when we think that the one individual about whom we have most knowledge is perhaps not worth preserving. But Christ looked at it not from our end but from God's. He did not consider the question from the point of view of what we think about ourselves or what we hope for for ourselves, but of what God thinks and what God hopes. We are the children of God, and therefore God wants us, and is not content to cut down His plans and expectations for us to the level either of our desert, our weariness, or our despair.

We are thus brought back again to the point that, in the last resort, belief in individual immortality depends on our conception of the character of God. If God is at all like what Christ supposed Him to be, personal immortality is completely proved.

[1] H. G. Wells in *God the Invisible King*.

But what if Christ be mistaken about God? Why should we trust His insight into reality rather than that of some who have thought otherwise than He?

My answer would be that, in regard to every question, that man gets the right solution who most clearly sees how to state the problem rightly, that man finds the law which explains phenomena who realises which are the really significant facts to be explained. And in this matter of the essential character of the Power behind the Universe, of all the facts Christ noted those which are the most significant, and of all the questions that can be asked He asked the most fundamental first. The conceptions we entertain about God depend very much on the moral and intellectual interests on which our own lives are concentrated. If, like the early Semite, we are preoccupied in internecine tribal wars, our God will be the great avenger—on His enemies and on ours. If, like the Buddha, we despair of life and seek only respite from the "wheel of Things," God will evaporate into the eternal calm of the ocean of unruffled Being. If, like the pure metaphysician, we are seeking merely the intellectual postulates of an intelligible world, we may chance to light upon an Absolute "beyond good and evil" or on some featureless Eternal which underlies the temporal. If, like the Scientific Materialist, we focus all our attention on the stupendous revelations which Chemistry and Physics have given as to the nature of the material creation, we may see nothing in or behind the Universe but matter and primal energy. But if, following the lead of Christ, we take a broader survey and look also into the heart of nature's last product, man, we shall see that the most fundamental thing to be explained is not the material Universe but the presence of life, and that the most significant thing about life itself is not its quantity but its quality. The real problem of the philosopher is to explain this—to tell us, not why we eat and drink, but why we can reverence or admire, not why we need our fellows, but why

we can also disinterestedly love. Any tenable hypothesis of the ultimate nature of Reality must, of course, explain the material creation, it must explain biological evolution, but it must explain in addition something much more difficult. The world and the struggle for life must indeed be accounted for, but in the last resort what most requires to be explained is not the struggle for life but the fact that men can rise above it and will cheerfully sacrifice life itself for a cause or an ideal.

If the highest life we know is a life which is capable of supreme devotion to ideals, we must surely attribute to the Source of all life a sense of value deeper, not shallower, than ours. That is what Christ taught—God is love. And it is the quality of His love, not of our achievement, which is the guarantee for our survival. God is the Creator, the great Artist, and must value what He has made just in proportion to the extent in which He has expressed Himself in it—of all the creatures, therefore, that we know on this earth, He must value most the being who, in however imperfect degree, is made in His own image. He is the great Artist, but He is much more than this. He is the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob—a God to whom the individual is personally dear. He is the all-Parent who cannot regard His children merely as details in a picture however glorious, or as notes in a tune however wonderful.

"What man is there of you, who, if his son shall ask him for a loaf, will give him a stone; or if he shall ask for a fish, will give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him." No one of us, could we help it, would consent to the extinction of a child or friend of ours. Can God then allow one of His children or His friends to cease to be? If so, He were either as impotent as we, or, not being impotent, more callous than ourselves. This cannot be.

If human goodness has in it anything of real and eternal value, if it is something grounded in ultimate reality, if it is an imperfect reflection of a characteristic of the Divine—then that Eternal and Divine Reality which is the ground and source of our poor goodness must be better, not worse, than ourselves. It must be more just, more tender, not less so than ourselves. To It even the falling to the ground of a single sparrow cannot but be a matter of concern. In the eyes of the Infinite Living Reality we are of more value than many sparrows—therefore Death is not the end.

More than this, it follows that Death, so far from being the end can only be a fresh beginning. If God really cares for the things which we see to be supremely valuable in life, why is it that their perfection is so rarely, or rather never, actually attained? Why is it that achievement is so often missed, character so often marred? Why are lives so obviously of value, so clearly moving on the upward path, in one case cut short by early death, in another strangely ruined or frustrated; why are so many others checked and stunted at the very start? Look where we will, poet and artist just miss the perfection of their art, the work of the clearest thinker is marred by some element of crankiness or error, the highest and noblest character shows strange inconsistencies and unexpected flaws.

There is but one possible answer. Life in this world is but a stage on the road to something farther on and better. It is a school whose curriculum is inexplicable, except as leading to a life's career beyond. It is the first act of a drama in which the characters are introduced, the action set in motion, but the whole plot is not yet seen. We see enough of life to feel sure that it is (or rather that to those who make it so it can be) an education; we see enough of the play to catch an inkling of a plot—but that is all. There is enough evidence of purpose and design to justify us in asserting that there must be more. And if so there must be a life

beyond the present in which that more will be worked out.

If man is potentially the noblest of all the Creator's works of art, he is also the most unfinished; if he is the child of God he is only in the nursery stage. A God that was content to leave it so would be morally of lower status than ourselves.

Christ and His Contemporaries

The Resurrection of the Body and the Day of Judgment are the most striking features of the form under which the nature and inauguration of the future life are conceived of in the New Testament. If we are to estimate the value of these conceptions for modern thought we must first ask exactly what the phrases meant on the lips of Christ Himself and of St. Paul. This cannot be done without a momentary glance at the history of the ideas. But the history of ideas alone may be actually misleading, unless certain principles of interpretation are already borne in mind.

To express in words thoughts even about simple and obvious matters, completely, adequately, and without possibility of misunderstanding, is always hard; to do so in deep matters about which we feel strongly is well-nigh impossible. Poets and prophets often, less frequently philosophers, have possessed to a supreme degree the gift of expressing thought in words, but in exact proportion to the originality of what they had to say they too have found complete and adequate expression elude their efforts. Prophet, philosopher, or poet can only express himself by means of the words, ideas, and conceptions which are familiar to his contemporaries; and some thoughts can only be conveyed indirectly by association or allusion. Hence, to interpret correctly the message of any great one of the past it is necessary first to study the world of thought and idea in which he lived; we must know something

of the background of historic memories, social usage, literary tradition and education of the contemporaries whom he was addressing. To seek his meaning we must ask, not what such and such words, if literally translated into English, would mean to us, but what associations the words would have in the minds of those who first heard or read them ; and this often means a careful study of the history of the phrase he uses. On the other hand, having once recognised this principle, and having once thoroughly studied the environment of the great man and the history and meaning to contemporaries of the words and conceptions with which he deals, we must beware of the error of supposing that by these words and ideas he means no more than an average contemporary would have understood by them. No great man is ever really understood by his contemporaries simply because the mere fact that what he says is so largely original makes it impossible for its full meaning to be brought home to the majority. Only after his influence has penetrated and has actually modified the thought-*milieu* of future generations does it become possible for any but the selected few to understand him.

No great man of the past can be interpreted aright if these two to some extent opposing considerations are lost sight of, but they are of more than ordinary importance for the interpretation of our Lord's views of the mode and circumstances of the future life. The thought-world of the Palestine in which He lived was so remote from our own that without some study of the background of contemporary thought we are bound to misconceive much of what He says. On the other hand, the depth and originality of His thought is such that it is not sufficient to study the meaning that the terms which He uses would have borne to an average contemporary. We must also remember that supremely in His case interpretation must beware of losing the spirit behind the letter, and we must recognise that the

key to the real meaning of His words must be sought in the clear apprehension of His outlook upon life and religion as a whole. And this is a key of which we can only possess ourselves in virtue of the fact that substantial elements at least of His general religious attitude have by this time percolated into and become a part of the substance of European thought.

The Resurrection of the Body

The oldest Hebrew literature, like the oldest Greek, reveals a belief in a dim, shadowy Underworld to which go the spirits of the departed—Sheol, the Hebrew equivalent of Hades, a world of ghosts and sapless shades leading a faint and feeble existence in which the same fate is shared by good and evil alike. "A land of thick darkness, as darkness itself; a land of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness" (Job x. 22). "Cast off among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more; and they are cut off from thy hand" (Ps. lxxxviii. 5). "The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence" (Ps. cxv. 17). It was not until some time after the return from the Babylonian Exile that the hope began to dawn that the righteous might have something better to look forward to than this land of darkness and of unsubstantial dreams. This dawning hope took the form of the belief that the body would be miraculously restored, its scattered elements recombined, and the soul brought back from Sheol to animate it. But this hope and expectation, it is important to remember, did not stand in isolation. It grew up and it only existed in integral connection with a particular development and extension of the expectation of a "Day of the Lord" and a Messianic Kingdom, very different in character from that looked forward to by the older Prophets, which was elaborated by a series of so-called Apocalyptic writers, beginning

with the second century B.C. The Book of Daniel and the Revelation of St. John are the only two works of the kind which have gained a place in the Canon, and most of the intervening members of the series were lost sight of quite early in the history of the Church.[1] Their rediscovery, mainly during the last half-century, has shed an entirely new light upon the origin and interpretation of that whole cycle of New Testament teaching which is connected with the Resurrection and the Day of Judgment, and on the meaning in detail of the ideas associated with these two central conceptions.

A review of the various stages in the development of the idea of the Resurrection, and a careful discrimination of the minor differences in which the conception is worked out by different Apocalyptic writers, is not here necessary. To students of theology it is familiar, for others it would be tedious. Two points only require to be emphasised :—

(1) The belief in the resurrection of the body was in a sense a protest against the older idea—which still survived among the powerful sect of Sadducees—of an empty and meaningless ghost existence. Compared and contrasted with life in Sheol, the belief in the Resurrection meant an immortality worth the having. In Sheol, again, good and evil fared alike. The association of the resurrection with a judgment on each individual according to his works was an emphatic affirmation that the consequences of right or wrong choice extend into the next life. So far, therefore, the belief in the resurrection of the body was an immense moral and religious advance.

(2) Without a return to life in the body it was felt that the righteous dead could have no share in the glorious Messianic Kingdom *on earth*, participation in which was their obvious due. A common view of these writers was that the old body of flesh and blood would be raised up with all its wounds and weakness, but would

[1] For a brief account of this literature cf. p. 176, note.

shortly be transformed into something more glorious than the body of this life.[1] The amount of transformation thought to be required, and the conception of the life to be lived in the transformed body, vary with the degree of spiritual insight in different writers; but some extremely crude and materialistic ideas are found, and it is probable that these appealed most widely to the popular mind.

The real meaning of our Lord's answer to the problem propounded by the Sadducees as to the woman who had seven husbands (Mk. xii. 18 ff.) cannot be properly understood unless it is considered in relation to these elements in contemporary thought. Thus, as against the belief in nothing better than a ghost existence in the world below, to which the majority of the Sadducees still adhered, He is emphatic that the dead are raised—that is to say, that the life of the future is something more glorious and more satisfying, not something less so, than this present life. On the other hand, He is equally opposed to any materialistic conception of a future life which is merely a glorified replica of the present, with marrying and giving in marriage, and with all the physical and social limitations which this inevitably involves in this world. The cruder elements in popular Apocalyptic He rejects with no less emphasis than He had rejected the empty, joyless future of the Sadducees. The future life will be no mere repetition of this; it will be something transcending all earthly experience—they will be "as the angels in heaven."

The discussion of the subject by St. Paul in writing to the Corinthians is conditioned by a somewhat different background of thought. The *via media* laid down by our Lord was defined in relation to opposing elements in Palestinian thought. On the one hand, to the cruder popular Apocalyptic expectation of a flesh and blood resurrection; on the other, to the

[1] Cf. 2 Baruch 50-51.

Sadducean belief in an unsubstantial life in Sheol. St. Paul's solution is equally a *via media*, but not between the same extremes. The difficulty felt by the Corinthians depended upon their supposing that they must make a choice between one of two alternatives. On the one side there was the same popular Apocalyptic belief in a flesh and blood resurrection still continuing in much of early Christian thought, but, on the other, there was, not, as in the case of our Lord's answer to the Sadducees, a conception of a shadowy Hades, but rather a belief in the immortality of the soul conceived along the lines of later Greek philosophy.

Like our Lord, St. Paul is emphatic in repudiating the notion that "flesh and blood" can inherit eternal life, but, as against a section of his Greek converts, he still argues that a body will be given by God—a *spiritual* body, indeed, but still a body. What was the point of this insistence? Greek thought valued the intellect above all. The affections were associated in that philosophy with the life of the body, they belonged to the temporal not to the eternal element in man's nature. To Greek thought *ἀπάθεια*, incapacity to feel, was a characteristic of the divine, and the life of God consisted in *θεωρία*, in pure intellectual activity apart from feeling. *νοῦς* only, the intellectual element in man which was held to be most akin to the divine, would certainly be immortal.

But to the Christian God is love, and the highest capacity in man is love. Hence feeling, effort, experience—things which come to us in and through the life of the body—are the things we value most, not least, and supreme values would be lost unless something corresponding to them exists in the life of the world to come.

Again, "pure reason" is the same for all men, and an immortality of the Reason only would tend to obliterate all individuality and idiosyncrasy. If the "body" stands for the medium of individuality, for the means

by which in the next world persons will be recognisable or still distinct—then the body must survive.

> Eternal form will still divide
> The Eternal soul from all beside
> And I shall know him when we meet.

To our Lord, then, and to St. Paul, the real meaning and value of the idea of the resurrection of the body does not consist in an affirmation of a material and flesh and blood existence in the future—that they both repudiate. It stands mainly for two things, that the life of the future will be richer not poorer than this life, and that individuality, personal distinctions, and the results of the moral and emotional as well as of the intellectual activities of this life will be preserved in the next. More than that, it means that the capacity for such activity will still endure. "Love never faileth." The future will be no Nirvana of passionless contemplation, but a full activity of the whole personality in conscious harmony with other souls.

It is probable, though less certain, that St. Paul had another reason for insisting on the importance of the body. His Epistles show that the tendencies of thought which appeared a little later as Gnosticism were already beginning to affect the Church. A fundamental tenet of this type of thought was the doctrine that matter, and therefore the body, is intrinsically evil and that spirit alone is good. In practice two contrary deductions could be and were made from this theory—*either* that the body must be crushed by an extreme asceticism *or* that the lusts of the flesh might be indulged in at will, since the further pollution of an already evil body cannot affect the spirit which is a prisoner within. The teaching that the body is an integral part of the complete nature and life of a being who is destined in his whole nature to inherit Eternal Life proved to be one of the strongest guarantees against the invasion of ideas which, though

sounding to modern ears as unscientific as immoral, had a strong appeal to serious thinkers in that age.

The foregoing summary makes it clear that the belief in the resurrection of the body arose, was developed, and was chiefly valued as being the most natural and obvious way in which to express in regard to the future life that belief in the Conservation and in the Augmentation of Value which, as has been previously argued, is of the essence of the Christian belief in God. It is the genius of Christianity to put the inward before the outward, the spiritual before the material; hence it is on the resurrection of the body as an expression of belief in the preservation of spiritual values that I would lay most stress. In so far as it is this, I would urge that it rests on the firm and inexpugnable ground of being a necessary deduction from our belief in God.

But a further question must be raised. Does an interpretation in terms of moral and spiritual values really exhaust the meaning of the conception of a "spiritual body" in the life to come? Ought we to affirm that the term "body" is no more than a mere symbol of our belief that, in some way at present inconceivable, spiritual values such as individuality, capacity for action or affection, and the possibility of mutual recognition are conserved? Or ought we to affirm that in the next life there will still exist an organ of expression of the activity of the spirit which, though not the same as the flesh and blood body of this life, has some recognisable analogy to it, and possibly even some direct connection with it?

Time and Space in the next Life

The answer to the foregoing question must mainly depend upon whether we think of the future life as being an existence in space, or whether we believe it to be a state of being in which our consciousness will,

in some way at present wholly inconceivable, be independent of spatial relations.

There is a widespread notion among philosophers and theologians that the life of the world to come must necessarily be one which transcends the conditions of time and space, and in which pure spirit can exist and function apart from all contact with or relation to matter. Granted such presuppositions, it is clear that the resurrection of the body is a meaningless phrase unless the word body is understood to be used in a purely symbolic sense. For a body in any ordinary sense can only exist in space. I must frankly confess that until lately I have felt bound to accept this view. But more recent reflection inclines me to question, not the validity of the deduction but the premisses from which it starts, and to ask, Are we really bound to assume that the life of the world to come is a life that is outside time and space?

At first sight it might seem that the question I am asking could not be answered without first obtaining a satisfactory solution of that most difficult philosophical problem, what is the real nature of space and time? If so, our question would have to wait long for an answer and nothing less than a treatise would suffice even to attempt it. But this is not required. The widespread notion that the life of the next world is one transcending time and space seems to me to be partly the result of an acute reaction against the crude conceptions of popular theology, and partly a confused deduction from four propositions. The propositions are of a very different character from one another, but no one of them, even if we admit it to be true, will really support the conclusion so often drawn from them.

These propositions are :—

(1) God exists outside time and space. To His consciousness all time is simultaneously present as an Eternal Now, and He is present in His entirety *totus ubique* at every point of space.

(2) Space and Time, according to Kant's famous contention, are not things having an independent objective existence, but are "forms of perception." They belong to the subjective constitution of our own mind, which is so made that it can only experience things as happening successively in time, and cannot think of them except as existing externally to the self and to one another in space.

(3) Thought is independent of space. It is no more difficult to think about the Dog Star millions of miles away than about a lamp in the room upstairs. A third-class railway compartment occupied by ten philosophers is not more crowded if they begin to discuss the Absolute, or less crowded if they all fall asleep.

(4) In this life, especially with the progress of years and infirmity, we are acutely conscious of material "limitations" to the spirit. Human aspiration would throw off all limitations in the life to come—and space seems to be one of these.

The sum total effect of these four sets of considerations is to produce a general feeling that somehow or other Time and Space are slightly discreditable and troublesome limitations belonging to the lower life of flesh and blood which we shall transcend in the world to come.

I submit, however, that a closer analysis of these arguments does not bear this out.

(1) The proposition that the Divine consciousness transcends Time and Space would be assented to by most, though not by all, philosophers; but assuming it to be true it is irrelevant to the question of the nature of *our* consciousness in the life to come—unless, indeed, we assume that what happens after death is a complete merging of the individual in the universal consciousness.

The arguments in support of the view that the consciousness of God transcends Time and Space are far

too complex to be summarised in this place. But so far as I apprehend them they (or at any rate the most important of them) are based on considerations which apply to the Infinite Consciousness *as such* and are not applicable to any finite consciousness. It is argued, for instance, that there must be an ultimate Unity which transcends all difference, an Absolute as the condition of the existence of the Relative, an Unchangeable as a background of change, a Perfection as the presupposition of the possibility of Progress. But these arguments (if valid at all) apply to God only because He is assumed to be Infinite; and for precisely the same reason they do *not* apply to any finite spirit.

The chief argument for the contrary view seems to me to be this. In the world to come the righteous may look forward to an ever closer union with the Divine, and in so far as this is consummated they may expect to share more and more of the Divine Life, and so ultimately to share the Divine consciousness in every way. Moreover, such a view seems at first sight to be borne out by that indescribable experience of the Poet, the Artist, or the Mystic which is commonly spoken of as "an experience of the Eternal in the temporal." This appeal to artistic and mystic experience cannot be lightly dismissed, but I believe on further analysis that the content of the consciousness in question will be found to consist in a sense of abidingness and contact with ultimate reality rather than in that complete elimination of the experience of succession which would be involved in perception outside time. Union with the Divine means primarily complete harmony of will and taste; it implies an identical sense of values in regard to whatever the individual experiences; it has nothing to do with the capacity to understand and experience all things whatsoever simultaneously in one *coup d'œil*. It may indeed be ultimately possible for the individual to become so closely identified with the Divine will as to be able to apprehend reality with something even of

the metaphysical transcendence of the Divine mind, but even so this could only be in a partial and, as it were, derivative way.[1] Otherwise the individual would be simply merged in the Universal consciousness, he would become just a part of God—a view which is inconsistent with that belief in individual immortality which on other grounds I have urged we should accept, and which in the last resort seems inconsistent with the possibility of either the love of God to man or of man to God, since an undifferentiated unit cannot love itself.

(2) We can accept, if we will, the argument of Kant that Time and Space are merely "forms of perception" without committing ourselves to the view that we shall be independent of them in the next life. For his argument in no way depends on the fact that we are beings encased in flesh and blood but on an analysis of the nature of perception applicable to any finite being. This point he himself makes quite clear in the additions to the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. "It is not necessary that we should limit this intuition in space and time to the sensibility of man. It is quite possible that all finite thinking beings must necessarily agree with us on this point." "Such an intuition (*i.e.* an intuition which is *not* limited to space and time), so far as we can understand, can belong to the First Being only."[2]

Many philosophers accept Kant's view of Space and Time in a modified form. They hold that these are, indeed, as he maintains, merely subjective "forms of perception," but go beyond him in supposing that they are the forms under which the Universal mind perceives things. God thinks the universe—that is what constitutes creation—and He thinks it under the forms of

[1] This appears to be substantially the view of St. Thomas Aquinas—himself a mystic and the friend of the notable mystic S. Bonaventura. Cf. *Summa* i. 10. 5, *creaturae spirituales quantum ad affectiones et intelligentias, in quibus est successio, mensurantur tempore . . . sed quantum ad visionem gloriae participant aeternitatem.*

[2] Cf. Max Müller's translation, p. 735.

time and space. Hence space and time, though ideal and subjective in relation to mind as such, are real and objective in relation to finite minds. This is a considerable departure from the teaching of Kant, since it ignores his distinction between "forms of perception" and "categories of the understanding."

But on this view it is even more clear that we can never transcend the limitations of Time and Space. For if the thought of God is what creates, and if things are what they are because God so thinks them, then, if God thinks them under the forms of Time and Space, we could only think of them otherwise by thinking of them as being something different from what they really are—a privilege to which few would aspire.

(3) The fact that thought does not itself occupy space and that distance is no impediment to thought, though true, is irrelevant. My thought about an elephant takes up no more room than my thought about the fly on its ear, but I can only think of either as occupying space and as being *external* to each other and to myself. And again, though I can think of Sirius as easily as of the house opposite, I can only think of it as being something which is *outside* myself, in the sense that I take for granted that the self which thinks is situated at or somehow centred in a particular spot in space which I call "here," and that the object I think of is situated at a certain distance, whether far or near, from that spot.

Of course there is a sense in which anything which is embraced by my thought is not "outside" myself, and it is impossible to think of my personality as strictly confined within the limits of my outermost skin. But the difficulty—a great one—of seeing how personality can be attached to a local centre, or of defining exactly where or what that centre is, does not alter the fact that the very possibility of perceiving objects in space implies that the percipient is "here" and the thing perceived is "there," *i.e.* that the percipient

has, somehow or other, a centre of consciousness at a particular point in space.

(4) The notion that space is a cramping limitation, which we may aspire to transcend in another world, is due to a confusion between space as a philosophical concept and distance as a practical impediment to attaining our desires. "O that I had wings like a dove" is a common enough desire, but what we really wish for is, not to escape from space altogether, but to be wafted rapidly and easily to some other point in space—to join some absent dear one or enjoy a fairer scene. In the life to come, for all we know, we may be able like Ariel "to put a girdle round the earth in forty minutes," to take a week-end trip to Mars or a six months' tour round the Milky Way. But an existence in which that was possible would be no more an existence which transcended the limits of space than is the life of a squirrel in a cage.

It would seem, then, that unless we suppose that after death the individual consciousness becomes part of the Universal Consciousness and "the dewdrop slips into the silent sea," that is, if there is such a thing as a separate individual immortality at all, the presumption is strongly in favour of the view that we shall continue to imagine and to perceive in terms of time and space.

But an ego that thinks in terms of space must necessarily have some centre of consciousness localised at any given moment in a particular spot; for otherwise it cannot think of objects as outside itself, or have any standpoint from which to survey them. Hence, a state of existence in which we can perceive things other than ourselves as existing in space is only possible if our consciousness has some localised centre such as in this world is provided by our body. This centre may be capable of moving from one place to another with incredible rapidity, but it must be something which exists in space and is at a particular point in space at any given time.

But a consciousness with a centre which exists in space at all must be conceived of as associated with or attached to some entity which is at any rate on the way to having a claim to the title "body" in more than a merely symbolic sense. The considerations which follow may seem to strengthen the claim.

Bodies Celestial and Bodies Terrestrial

It has been shown above that, once we dismiss from our minds the idea that the next life is one that transcends the conditions of time and space, and once we clearly recognise that if we must expect still to look out upon a Universe that exists in space, we are compelled to assume that the ego must have some kind of local centre. But if the ego is to survive at all it is incredible that it will survive merely as a "looker on." It must live and move and act. But this means that, related to the local centre which we are bound to postulate in order to make even "looking on" a possibility, there must also be an organ or instrument of the activity of the personality having something like the same kind of relation to it that the physical body has to mind and will in this life. At once we seem to be driven to postulate something which may be called a "body" in something like the ordinary sense of that term. But if so, of what nature is this local centre, this instrument, this organ of the spirit, this "body" if we may so call it. Is it material?

Certainly not, if by "material" is meant something which you can kick with your boot. But that is not the proper meaning of the word. A cubic foot of hydrogen, invisible and lighter than the air, is precisely no more and no less "material" than a cubic foot of lead. And the ultimate atom of which any kind of matter is composed has lately been shown to be no undifferentiated "solid" mass but a vortex, a kind of infinitesimal solar system, of electrons; which electrons

themselves seem, so far as can at present be determined, to be units of electric force without any measurable solid substratum. Matter is not necessarily something gross; indeed, if scientific speculations as to the ether are correct, it is not necessarily even ponderable. We need not even raise, much less attempt to settle, that most difficult of all philosophical questions, what is matter and what is its relation to mind? (By matter is meant that which can be thought of as other than mind or spirit.) Whether mind or matter are in the last resort disparate, or whether they are each an aspect of some ultimate substance which is neither, or whether one is a product of the other are questions on which the doctors largely differ. We need not stay to discuss these questions; for whatever views are held about them, it would be admitted that what exists in and occupies space must be called matter, whatever its mobility, its tenuity, or its capacity for rapidly assuming different forms. Hence we cannot deny the attribute "material" in its strictly philosophic sense to the "body" of the future life; though in the popular sense of the word "material" we assuredly must do so—and that with emphasis, since we must suppose it to be normally invisible and impalpable to earthly senses, though probably both visible and palpable to the acuter perceptions of the next life.

We may proceed to ask whether we can suppose there to be any further analogies between the "body" of this life and this material instrument of the spirit in the next, which would perhaps even more fully justify the use of the term "body" to describe it?

The time is past when a point of this kind could be considered as settled by a discussion of the exact exegesis of a text of Scripture, but it can never be wholly irrelevant to examine the underlying principle of the inspired intuitions of such an original thinker and profound religious genius as St. Paul.

What, then, is the fundamental idea at the back of

St. Paul's mind when he draws his famous distinction between the natural body of flesh and blood (*σῶμα ψυχικόν*) and the spiritual body (*σῶμα πνευματικόν*) of the life to come? It is often supposed that by "spiritual" he means "made of spirit," *i.e.* "immaterial." This is a possible meaning; St. Paul certainly did not regard the future body as material in the crude popular sense, for he expressly denies that flesh and blood can inherit eternal life; but the context makes another interpretation more probable. Since "natural" (*ψυχικόν*) in the context does not mean a body *made of* *ψυχή*, but a body *adapted to the life of* the *ψυχή*, it is probable that by "spiritual" (*πνευματικόν*) body is meant, not a body *made* of *πνεῦμα*, but a body *adapted to the life of* the *πνεῦμα*. When in Greek the words *ψυχή* and *πνεῦμα* are used in contrast to one another, the word *ψυχή* always stands for the life which man shares with the animals, while *πνεῦμα* stands for those higher capacities in which he transcends them. Thus the "natural" body is one adapted to a life in which eating, drinking, and the continuance of the species are necessary; the "spiritual" body is one adapted to a life in which these things are left behind, but in which the higher activities of life are to be pursued in an enhanced and intensified degree. In fact, in each case he is thinking not of the material of which the body is composed, but, to use a modern phrase, of the environment to which it is adapted.

If this interpretation is correct, the idea that lies behind St. Paul's mind, put into modern language, is something like this. The body is essentially the means of expression of the life of the spirit, and the organ of its activity. As such it is adapted to its environment, and it draws its substance and nourishment from that environment. Change the environment, and the spirit must find a new expression for its life, a new organ of its activity, a new "body." But the new "body" will be as perfectly (indeed, we hope more perfectly) adapted

to the new environment as the old body was to the old environment; it must, therefore, be of an entirely different character. "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural, it is raised a spiritual body" (1 Cor. xv. 42-44). And its substance (whatever that may be) is derived from the new environment; it is "a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor. v. 1). "Thou sowest not the body that shall be . . . but God giveth it a body" (1 Cor. xv. 37-38).

The idea is one which it will be worth while to follow out a little further.

In this world mind is the highest form of life, and life only appears in connection with organisms made up of material constituents. It is, however, important to observe the relation which exists in any living animal between the life principle and the material organism. Whether we regard the life principle as a separate entity, having much the same relation to the material organism as a bird to its cage or a tenant to his house, or whether we regard the organism as a single entity of which the life principle and the body which is its material concomitant are merely two aspects, it is clear that the life principle is, so to speak, the predominant partner. A contrast must be made between what in popular language is known as "living matter" and "dead matter." "Dead matter," so-called, can only grow as a result of accretion from without, and can only move as a result of impact from some external force. Living matter grows by absorbing into itself, by means of its own spontaneous activity, matter originally outside it, and it transforms the character of that which it takes in, so that it becomes assimilated to itself. In the case of animal organisms there is in addition a *conscious* selection and rejection of the outside material according as it is suitable or otherwise to assimilation; and this purposive

selection is still further facilitated by a power of spontaneous movement in space.

The human body has its origin in a minute cell, or rather in the conjunction of two minute cells, and from this small beginning, first within and afterwards outside the womb, it gradually increases in size and in differentiation of function in regard to its parts till the age of maturity. But the important point to notice is that it is only by virtue of the continued activity of the life principle within it that this process of growth is accomplished, and that the continued nourishment and repair of the body when grown is maintained. There is, of course, no point at which we can say that the life exists apart from its material substratum, but it is equally true to say that the developed body has been built up by and is the result of the initiative, activity, and dominance of the principle of life within it. The most highly evolved expression of this principle of life is that complex of will, thought, and feeling which we call mind or consciousness. It would seem, therefore, that, up to a point, it is literally true to say that the body is made by the soul within it, using the term soul to include the unconscious and subconscious as well as the conscious manifestations of the principle of life.

Now, if we believe that the soul is a thing which has such an intrinsic value that, if the universe is a reasonable and tolerable universe, it must somehow or other be preserved, it is surely reasonable to suppose that it will not lose this capacity of building up for itself out of its environment a body which can be an organ of expression and activity adapted to its new environment.

"When they shall rise from the dead," said our Lord, "they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels in Heaven." A body adapted to the environment of the life to come will be one which will not be adapted to eating, drinking, and the continuance of the species. Our present bodies have been developed during a long course of evolution throughout which the

environment has been such that the chief form of adaptation demanded has been in regard to activities of this kind. Hence they are less perfectly adapted than we could wish to those higher activities of the soul whose possibilities and value have come into view comparatively late in the physical history of the race. Our bodies are the only means we have for the expression of our aspirations, our creative, our ethical and our aesthetic activities, nevertheless they are felt to be clumsy and inefficient mediums of such expression just in proportion to the mental, moral, and aesthetic development of the individual. What ardent soul would not wish to construct for itself an organ of expression more subtly responsive to its needs and aspirations than the body of this life? "Here in the body pent, absent from Thee I roam" expresses a feeling which in one form or another few have not experienced. A body, but one immune from the weaknesses and limitations and grosser wants of this world, is what we all should wish for. And, after all, is there really any solid reason why we should not do so?

Matter, let me repeat, exists in subtler forms than flesh and blood. Bodies, as St. Paul says, may be of many different kinds. Speculations as to bodies made of ether or some such substance are too often nowadays pursued into the realms of the fanciful and the absurd, nevertheless it is, I would submit, both unphilosophic and unscientific to reject entirely every such hypothesis as unworthy of serious consideration. Such speculations, no doubt, are to be found most frequently in books which portray the future life with a childish elaboration of grotesque and material details vouched for by fancied revelations, the greater part of which clearly rest either on misunderstanding of the true nature of phenomena like automatic writing [1] or mediumistic vision, or on conscious fraud, or on a mixture of the two. But is not the widespread popularity of such literature the natural and inevitable result of the fact that

[1] Cf. pp. 257-262, 322 ff.

more sober teachers have been content, either to go on merely repeating a traditional Apocalyptic symbolism that has lost all meaning and attraction to the modern mind; or, by insisting that the life of the next world must transcend the conditions of Time and Space, have offered mankind a conception which to the intellect is a puzzle and to the imagination an empty blank?

The attempt to reach too precise and detailed a conception of the nature of the "spiritual" body is to be deprecated. Speculations on the subject may easily become so fanciful and uncertain that they tend to throw discredit on the very idea of a "spiritual" body at all. There is, however, one question which cannot be altogether avoided. If I ask "With what body do they come?" I raise a question wider than that of the constituency, material or otherwise, of the future integument of the soul. The body of youth is very different from the body of old age. Shall we be raised up young or old? In the resurrection of the dead, will a man meet his mother as he remembers her when he laid her grey-headed in the grave, or will it be as his father saw her in the prime of life at the marriage altar, or will it be as her grandmother knew her a baby in the cradle? In this life we recognise our friends by sight and touch and by the sound of the voice. Will recognition of persons in the next life also depend on something corresponding to sense impressions?

I think a distinction should be drawn. We cannot imagine that in the life to come the Heavens will cease to declare the glory of God; or that the "music of the spheres" (if such there be) should sound, and we be deaf. In the immensity of the universe there must be sights and sounds strange and beautiful yet to be revealed. And why may not the mountains, the sunsets, and the flowers of this earth still be open to our gaze —but seen as still more glorious by the undimmed eye and heightened perceptions of the body that shall be?

The beauty and the glory may no longer come to us through five separate avenues of sense; perhaps it may be through more than five, perhaps through less, but obviously in a life under conditions of Time and Space the capacity of aesthetic appreciation depends on there being *something corresponding* to sense perception. On the other hand, it is probable that the communication between soul and soul on which recognition, mutual understanding, and fellowship depend will be far less dependent there than here on sense perception. Phenomena like Telepathy and thought-transference and the richer though more familiar experience of sympathy and fellowship in love and friendship, point already in the direction of a possibility of recognition and inter-communion without the need of sight or hearing. But if this be so, then in the next life, though we may expect to see and hear our loved ones, we shall not be dependent on seeing and hearing for knowledge of and communion with them. No changes in outward form will prevent immediate recognition of our friends; and not only of them, but of those also whom we have never known in this life. Elijah and St. Paul will not look at all like the portraits of them in stained-glass windows; but we shall be able to recognise them none the less.

The Hour of Death

> Now might I do it pat, now he is praying;
> And now I'll do 't. And so he goes to heaven;
> And so am I revenged.

Thus Hamlet declines to kill the king at prayer, he will rather wait till he can find him

> about some act
> That has no relish of salvation in 't;
> Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven,
> And that his soul may be as damn'd and black
> As hell, whereto it goes.

The idea of the supreme importance of the last few moments of life on earth appears conspicuously in the Prayer Book—in the Service for the Burial of the Dead, "Suffer us not at our last hour, for any pains of death, to fall from thee," in the petition in the Litany against "sudden death," and in that for deliverance "in the hour of death and in the day of judgment." In Roman Catholic theology, again, it is held that one who has committed any mortal sin must, if he dies unabsolved, inevitably go to Hell. This widespread and deeply rooted conviction as to the critical nature of the Hour of Death contains an element which, I would submit, is both true and important, and also an element which, I venture to think, is superstitious and immoral.

> All is but lost, that living we bestow,
> If not well ended at our dying day.
> Oh man, have mind of that last bitter throe,
> For as the tree does fall, so lies it ever low.[1]

The haunting fear that at the last moment some little slip may cause a noble soul to trip and fall from Heaven to Hell has been the cause of untold misery and superstition. While the idea that there will be a chance to make it all right on one's death-bed has helped many another to stifle the warnings of his conscience. It is time that Christian teaching repudiated far more openly and with far more emphasis than heretofore, all relics of the notion that a man's life will be judged not as a whole but solely by the thought or act of its last moment. Such a view revolts our sense of justice; it is really inconsistent with a thoroughgoing belief in the goodness of God. And, if God is not just and not good—and that in a sense in which we can understand those words—what becomes of the hope of Immortality at all?

On the other hand, it is important to remember that the circumstances of death vary immensely. Very often, so far as we can see, death has in it no element

[1] Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, i. 10. 41.

of crisis ; it is a mere passing away from this life which is hardly likely to modify the character at all. In other cases it occurs as the climax of a great moral, mental, or physical struggle. Now, the way in which we react to any great crisis in life, profoundly and permanently modifies our character—either for better or for worse. The circumstances of a man's last moments may be such that the very fact of facing death may be the expression of an act of choice of the highest moral value. The sailor who goes down with his ship after standing aside to let the women and children be saved, the soldier who dies heroically for the sake of what he believes to be the cause of right, are doing something else than merely dying. They are performing acts of supreme moral value ; and no one can perform any act having any degree of moral excellence at all without being permanently the better for it, whether he goes on living in this world or the next. And what applies to the sailor and the soldier applies also to many cases where death follows an accident or an illness—the way in which the soul reacts to the whole set of circumstances, be they prolonged or be they short and sudden, which culminate in death, cannot but affect for better or for worse the state in which he makes a new beginning in the life to come. Again, the possibility of a death-bed repentance is not a thing to be ignored. Those who postpone repentance to their death-bed, commonly find it impossible to repent then ; for repentance means a real change of heart and not merely the conventional reaction of a frivolous nature terrified at the thought of Hell. But cases of real and genuine change of heart on the death-bed do occur ; and when they occur they constitute a real change of character which cannot but affect the moral level at which a man enters into the life of the world to come, and this, as will appear from what follows, is really a matter of no small moment.

The Resurrection—its Time and Manner

"And the sea gave up the dead which were in it." Christian art has delighted in the picture of waves dividing, tombs bursting, and the dead coming forth, naked or in grave-clothes, just as they were when last seen by human eye, to stand before the Throne. Theology has added that if any had been consumed with fire, devoured by beasts or scattered to the winds, the bodies of these also will be restored "bone to his bone" as in Ezekiel's vision.[1] This crude, but vividly dramatic, conception of the resurrection, ultimately derived from pre-Christian Apocalyptic, was held by many, though by no means all, of the early Fathers of the Church. But, as has been already shown, it is directly opposed not only to the clear implications of our Lord's teaching, but to the actual letter of St. Paul's—"that which thou sowest, thou sowest not the body that shall be"; "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." At the present day there is not, so far as I am aware, any theologian of repute by whom it would be maintained; but it is still sufficiently prevalent, especially among the less educated, to be the cause of a widespread misunderstanding, and consequently of a complete rejection, of the real teaching of the New Testament, and too often, along with that, of any definite and effective belief in Immortality at all.

The notion of a material identity between the present and the future bodies is one which ought to be far more emphatically repudiated by the Church than has hitherto been done; but that does not mean that there is no connection or continuity between them. That connection, however, clearly cannot consist in identity of material particles; for even in this life, so we are told, the material particles which constitute our

[1] Ezek. xxxvii. In Ezekiel the original reference of the vision was not to the resurrection of the individual but to the restoration of the scattered remnants of Israel.

bodies are completely replaced about once in every seven years. The principle of continuity and connection between my body of to-day and my body of twenty years ago is to be found, not in its material particles, but in the form-giving, body-building principle of life within, *i.e.* in the soul. The soul is not, as the Gnostics thought, a mere prisoner in a body of alien nature. Body affects soul and soul affects body, and neither is complete without the other; but, as argued above, the soul is the "predominant partner." But if the principle of bodily continuity even in this world is found, not in any identity of material particles, but in the soul, it is obvious that the principle of continuity between the terrestrial and the celestial body also must be looked for in the same direction. And if we ask how the connection we seek can be adequately supplied by the soul, the reply would be that it is in virtue of that power inherent in the life principle of determining form and of building up by assimilation *from its environment* a *new* body suited to that environment—whether that environment be in this world or in the world beyond our sight.

It may be asked whether some light on the relation of the present and the future body cannot be derived from the accounts in the Gospels of the Resurrection of our Lord. This would undoubtedly be the case if only we might assume that every detail in these stories was to be relied upon as authentic. That assumption, however, is one which I personally am unable to make. The belief that our Lord showed Himself alive after His passion rests upon a stronger historical basis than is often supposed. Quite apart from the literary evidence, of which the most remarkable is the first-hand and detailed account of the various appearances by St. Paul (1 Cor. xv. 3-8), the broad fact of the rise of Christianity has somehow to be explained. It is impossible to account for the fact that a body of peasants—crushed and disillusioned by the crucifixion of

the leader they had regarded as the destined Master of the world—started forthwith, in the face of incredulity, opposition, and bitter persecution, to preach with passion and conviction the Gospel that He was the Son of God soon to return in glory as Judge of all mankind, except on the hypothesis that some startling event or events had occurred which put it for them absolutely beyond doubt that He was still alive. But the historical value of the accounts given in the Gospels of these events is a very different matter. No doubt the bulk of the material in the first three Gospels has a high degree of historical value—of that a prolonged study of the subject has convinced me—but there are special reasons why I feel that too much confidence cannot be put in the details of the accounts they give of the Resurrection.

Of these one of the most weighty is the unfortunate disappearance of the original conclusion of St. Mark, which is the earliest and (for purposes of narrative as distinct from discourse) the most reliable of the three. Another is the fact that, in spite of the clear teaching of our Lord and of St. Paul, the early Church continued to be largely dominated by the pre-Christian idea of a flesh and blood resurrection; and there are clear indications that the influence of this preconceived idea has modified the tradition of what actually happened in this case. The most conspicuous, but not the only, instance of this would be the statement (Lk. xxiv. 39-43) that the Risen Master partook in the presence of the disciples of a piece of broiled fish, and invited them to handle a body of "flesh and bones."

In view of this unreliability of the tradition in points of detail, it seems to me impossible to make use of it to elucidate our conception of the nature of the continuity between our bodies in this and in the next life. On the contrary, my own inclination is to reverse the process and to approach the particular question of the relation between the crucified and the risen body of our

Lord Himself in the light of the conclusions arrived at above as to the general question of the continuity and connection between the "natural" and the "spiritual" body. I am far from wishing to dogmatise on the difficult subject of the manner of our Lord's Resurrection, but in trying to frame a conception of it for myself, I am disposed to look first to His own teaching and that of St. Paul on the nature of the Resurrection-body. I cannot build upon the details of a tradition which there is reason to think has been influenced by the *a priori* conceptions of a generation which, in this as in other things, only partially understood either the Master or His greatest follower.

There remains to ask how we may conceive the transition from the "natural" to the "spiritual" body to be effected. Three main answers to this question have been suggested.

We may suppose that during our life on earth we are, although we know it not, building up an unseen celestial body which is a sort of counterpart of our earthly body but more exactly adapted to the expression of the character which our thoughts and conduct are all the while developing. Or, again, we may hold that the death of this body is the very act of birth of a new body which will grow, possibly with immense rapidity, to be a perfect expression of the character to which we shall have by that time attained. In either case we may expect the body to reflect the nature of the self far more clearly than it does in this world. It will be fair and vigorous when the character is good, mean and weak when the character is bad. And in either case, if there is any growth or change of our character in the next life, it would be reflected and accompanied by a corresponding growth in the "spiritual" body.

As between these two alternatives there seems little to choose, and little evidence on which to base a decision. The third possibility is one which, personally, I am disinclined to accept, but, as the weight of

tradition can be pleaded in its favour, it demands a serious consideration.

Christian theology inherited from Jewish Apocalyptic the idea that after death there is an interval during which the soul waits in a disembodied state until the time is ripe for a general resurrection of all men for the Day of Judgment, and that its assumption of the risen body will be postponed till that date. The validity or otherwise of this view cannot be considered without a brief summary of its origin and history.

As has already been pointed out, the Jews, until long after the return from Babylon, believed that the soul at death left the body and departed to a joyless existence in Sheol. The Apocalyptic writers started with the conception of Sheol as an accepted belief. Their own contribution to a more worthy conception of immortality was twofold. They moralised the conception of Sheol itself by making a considerable difference in the degree of happiness and the quality of life enjoyed there—a difference which depended on the degree of goodness or wickedness in the life that had been led on earth. In addition to this they taught that ultimately all the spirits of the righteous would be recalled from Sheol altogether and would again assume their bodies to enjoy a fuller and more glorious life. This bodily resurrection was connected either with the establishment or with the end and final sublimation into Heaven of the Messianic Kingdom on earth. Thus the idea that there must be a long interval between death and resurrection in the case of any individual who dies before the General Resurrection of all men was partly due to the survival of an originally non-ethical conception of life in Sheol as the next stage after death, and was partly due to the historical fact that belief in the resurrection (*i.e.* in a full and worthy immortality for the individual) was to the mind of the average Jew inextricably bound up with the conception of the Messianic Kingdom upon earth.

This idea, along with others, the early Church took over more or less uncriticised from Jewish Apocalyptic. But there are two points worth noting.

(1) The belief in a long interval between death and resurrection cannot claim to have behind it the authority of our Lord's own teaching. True, there are sayings of His which might appear to suggest it, but there are others which imply something much more like the view advocated above. A crucial saying is that to the Penitent Thief, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Paradise in Jewish Apocalyptic (wherever the word does not refer to the earthly Garden of Eden) is one of the divisions of Heaven; it does not mean a department of Sheol. Our Lord therefore, it would seem, expected that both He and the Thief would go straight to Heaven without any interval in Hades. The Parable of Dives and Lazarus, if we accept the current view that "Abraham's bosom" is a synonym for Paradise, has precisely the same implication. Again, His argument to the Sadducees, that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is not the God of the dead but of the living, would lose half its force if we suppose He thought of them as being in a "disembodied state," *i.e.*, as enjoying a less full and real life than they had done on earth.[1] No doubt the idea that our Lord Himself spent the interval between Good Friday and Easter morning in Hades is found in the primitive Church; but that is easily explained as being the natural, indeed the inevitable, inference which minds trained in Jewish Apocalyptic would draw from the fact that the series of events which convinced the Apostles of His Resurrection began on the third day. The inference was a natural one; it does not follow that it was correct.[2]

[1] The idea that the new life of the transformed ψυχή follows immediately after death, which appears in 4 Macc. ix. 22, xvii. 18, xviii. 23, *may* have been already current in some circles in Palestine.

[2] The clause "descended into Hell" first appears in a local version of the Apostles' Creed about the year 400 A.D. Its probable reference is to the "raking of Hell," *i.e.* to the belief that during the interval between His Death and Resurrection

(2) The question is one on which St. Paul's views appear to have undergone a change. When he wrote the Epistles to the Thessalonians and the first Epistle to the Corinthians he expected to be alive at a visible Second Coming of Christ, and he taught that the dead would first be raised (evidently from Sheol) to meet the Lord. Later in life he writes to the Philippians of his desire "to depart and be with Christ." Whether or not he had faced the full implications of this remark we cannot be certain. But we know that he habitually thought of Christ and His celestial body as in Heaven, not in Sheol; and the expectation that after death he will at once depart to be with Christ logically involves the complete abandonment of the old belief in any interval of waiting in Sheol at all before the entry into the resurrection life.

Possibly, in another of its aspects, the idea of "the end of all things" is one which should still be retained. The realisation of the Kingdom of God on earth is as much an integral part of the Christian hope as is the entry of the individual into immortal life—and this can only be realised after a long process, which may possibly culminate in a final consummation before this planet becomes uninhabitable, if, as is generally supposed, this will sooner or later be the case. Again, if the dead still take an interest in this earth—and at the very least they cannot but be affected by the moral quality of those who keep leaving this world to enter the society of which they are members—there is a sense in which "they without us should not be made perfect," since the full achievement of the glory of Heaven must wait for the complete regeneration of Earth.

But the corporate regeneration of society on earth and the entry by the individual into that state where

our Lord preached to, converted and baptized the righteous men of old. In so far as it is an endeavour to assert the principle that a way of salvation is provided for good men who die without the opportunity of hearing the full Christian message presented in a form which they can definitely accept, the insertion of the clause marks a real improvement on the older form of the Creed. Cf. p. 202 *n.*

"this mortal shall have put on immortality" are two quite different things. The one has to do with this visible, the other with the unseen world. Jewish and early Christian Apocalyptic, holding that both would be achieved *together* through the coming of the Messianic Kingdom, really confused two separate issues. But it is surely unreasonable for us—who both clearly realise the distinction between them, and also the historical causes which led to their being confused—to continue to suppose that the resurrection of the individual must await the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Hence, though we may recognise elements of truth in the old expectation of the Last Day, I would urge that Christian teaching would do well to surrender avowedly and completely the belief that the resurrection, that is, the assumption by the spirit of its celestial body, is postponed to a distant future.

To reject the idea of a possible interval between death and resurrection is no doubt to abandon the form of primitive Christian belief, but it is really to return to its substance. All the first generation of Christians believed, like St. Paul when he wrote his earlier letters, that *in their own case* there would be no interval at all between this life and the entry into the glorious life of the world to come. Thus, if we affirm that we too, at once and without any interval of waiting, shall take on our new celestial bodies, we affirm exactly what the Apostles taught would happen to themselves and to every member of the Church they knew. The notion of an age-long interval between death and resurrection is an inheritance from the letter of Jewish Apocalyptic which the actual vital belief of the first generation of Christians had in practice, though not in theory, already discarded. For themselves they undoubtedly believed there would be no interval of waiting; and they never considered the question in regard to generations yet unborn, for the simple reason that they believed that the end of the

world would come in their own lifetime. Hence, I would submit that, if we believe with regard to ourselves what they believed with regard to themselves, we are actually nearer to primitive belief than if we accept the views of traditional theology.

But if we get rid of the supposed interval between Death and Resurrection, we dispose at the same time of the interval between Death and Judgment. And this is a great gain, for it is only by so doing that we are able to accept in anything like its original force and meaning one of the central features in the teaching of our Lord. "Watch, therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour." "In an hour that ye know not, the Son of Man cometh." These and similar sayings were undoubtedly intended by our Lord and understood by the Apostles to refer to the Last Judgment, conceived of as a stupendous crisis, which those who heard Him might at any moment be called upon to face. "In the midst of life we are in death," and if, but only if, we hold that for each man the day of death is also the Day of Judgment can we understand and realise in our own lives the meaning of this vital element in His message.

How and why the day of death both can and must be also a day of judgment will be shown later.[1]

The Day of Judgment

Quantus tremor est futurus,
Quando Judex est venturus,
Cuncta stricte discussurus.

Tuba, mirum spargens sonum
Per sepulchra regionum,
Coget omnes ante thronum.

The notion of one final Great Assize logically stands or falls with the idea of a General Resurrection at the

[1] In Mediaeval and Roman Catholic Theology it is held, rightly, I would maintain, that a "Particular" Judgment of the individual follows immediately upon death; but the belief in a subsequent Universal Judgment on the Last Day, which in that case is surely superfluous, is retained from the Apocalyptic tradition.

Last Day. If we recognise this we are at once faced with two questions. What are we to make of the language of the New Testament with regard to the Second Coming of Our Lord? And how are we to think of the Judgment at all? Of the meaning and value for modern thought of the idea of the Second Coming of Christ space will not permit a discussion now, so I may be permitted to refer to my treatment of it in the volume *Concerning Prayer*.[1] The question, however, of our conception of the nature of the Judgment is vital to the subject in hand. Any attempt to answer it must begin with a brief examination of the words ascribed to our Lord in the Gospels.

If we wish to estimate truly the relation of the teaching of our Lord to the Apocalyptic views of the time, we must be careful never to lose sight of the principles of interpretation outlined above (cf. pp. 89 ff.). Besides this, it is of the first importance to note how little in the way of detailed description can be found in His sayings with regard to the closely associated topics of Resurrection, Second Coming, and Judgment. This is one of those cases where silence is evidential; for it is just this sort of detail about which all minds are greedy for information and in which Jewish and Christian Apocalyptic in general abounds. Those sayings of our Lord have been preserved which seemed most interesting and most important to contemporaries; if, therefore, the record contains little on a topic in which contemporary interest was so strong, it can only be because there was little to record. There is, moreover, on purely critical grounds, reason to believe that even the small amount of detail that is to be found in His reported sayings is at least in part due to embellishment by Christian tradition of the actual words He used. Our Lord's avoidance of detail, therefore, was clearly intentional. His declaration that He did not

[1] Cf. section "Armageddon and the New Jerusalem" of the Essay on "God and the World's Pain," pp. 12-19.

know the hour of His Coming, and His explicit repudiation before the Sadducees of the grosser forms of the contemporary ideas as to the resurrection which has already been discussed, all point in one direction. While accepting the great ideas of Apocalyptic—judgment and eternal life—He recognised the inadequacy and even, up to a point, the misleading tendency of the more elaborate details in the contemporary ideas.

The only two passages in the Gospels which describe the Last Judgment with any approach to elaboration occur in St. Matthew ; and it is probable that both of these are instances of the tendency which undoubtedly existed in primitive Christian tradition to bring His language into closer accord with contemporary Apocalyptic ideas by the addition of current phrases.[1] In the case of one of them, the description in Matt. xxiv. 29-31, this can be definitely proved. Practically all scholars are now agreed that a large part of the First Gospel has been copied with editorial modifications from St. Mark or from a document practically identical with St. Mark ; we have only then to compare this passage of St. Matthew with the earlier version of it in Mark xiii. 24-27 to see this process of elaboration at work.

Matthew xxiv. 29-31.	Mark xiii. 24-27.
But immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken : *and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven : and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn*, and they shall see the Son of man coming on the	But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall be falling from heaven, and the powers that are in the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And then shall he send forth the angels and shall gather together

[1] For the proof of the existence of this tendency, especially in the First Gospel, cf. *Oxford Studies in the Synoptic Problem*, pp. 425-436.

clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send forth his angels *with a great sound of a trumpet*, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.

Notice in particular that the famous "last trump" does not occur in the more original version represented by St. Mark.[1]

Moreover, it is not only clear that the editor of the First Gospel has here elaborated the details of the original passage in St. Mark; there is also reason to suppose that Mark xiii., itself, the so-called "Little Apocalypse" (and the parallels in Matthew xxiv. and Luke xxi. which are derived from it), is that section in the Synoptic Gospels where the probability of the presence of unauthentic details is at its maximum.[2]

The second passage is the tremendous scene (Matt. xxv. 31-46) where all the nations are gathered before the Son of Man sitting on the throne of his glory to be separated "as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." Here again, as is shown elsewhere in this volume,[3] there is reason to suspect that the details of the picture have been modified through reminiscences of Enoch and other Apocalyptic books. But, in any case, the whole passage reads as if it were a parable intended mainly to point the moral, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these. . . ." It does not read as if it were meant to be taken as a description of an event in which every detail is to be taken literally.

Even more important, however, for our purpose is it to recognise how entirely the dramatic picture of an external act of judgment disappears in the interpretation

[1] The trumpet before the Judgment is found in Jewish Apocalyptic (cf. 4 Ez. vi. 23), and its mention by St. Paul (1 Thess. iv. 16, 1 Cor. xv. 52) and by the editor of the First Gospel is doubtless due to current Apocalyptic tradition.

[2] Cf. *Oxford Studies in the Synoptic Problem*, pp. 179 ff.

[3] Cf. Essay V. p. 197 *n.*

given in the Fourth Gospel. In the teaching of this Gospel judgment is not a single act by an external power. "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me may not abide in the darkness. And if any man hear my sayings, and keep them not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John xii. 46-48). Again, in John ix. 39, we read: "For judgment came I into this world; that they which see not may see, and that they which see may become blind." Judgment is by an internal and automatic process, it is a necessary consequence of rejection of the light, it is a process of moral deterioration, the results of which, not always visible here, will be clearly revealed "on the last day." Scientists tell us that every act, every thought, every wish, leaves its record on the grey matter of the brain, and common experience shows that every deed and every impulse leaves its trace on character. In this life we simply cannot stand still, we are perpetually compelled to choose and to act; and according as we accept or reject the light, according as we incline in thought, word, or deed towards the good or towards the evil, we are building up our character for better or for worse. If Judgment means discrimination between good and evil, it is automatically proceeding all the while; the Last Day will not be something new and added, it will merely be the revelation of a *fait accompli*. But it will be a revelation inevitably entailing some startling and tremendous consequences.

And what, we may ask, will those consequences be?

If our previous argument is sound, we must eliminate the idea of an interval between death and resurrection, and say that for each individual, the day of death will also be the Day of Judgment. A moment's consideration will show that it requires no artificial machinery to make it so. The distinction between the sheep

and goats, in this world so obscure, in the next must necessarily at once be patent. The very act of entering into the next life means that we leave behind us all those external advantages such as wealth, power, physical strength and beauty which so often in this world win for us a respect and admiration wholly undeserved and serve to disguise from others and from ourselves our real character. We shall enter an immense society, "join the majority" as we say, where we must stand only on our merits. We shall be rated not by what we have, nor by what we seem, but simply by what we are.

But there is a further and still more important consideration. Even in this world the outward appearance of the body is to some extent modified by the life of the soul within, which profoundly affects both its general health and vigour and the expression of the face and carriage. But if we accept in any degree at all the view that the "spiritual" body of the next life will be one which will be a more perfect organ than is our present body for the expression of the spirit, then in the next world the body will no longer be able to disguise, it will, on the contrary, perfectly reveal the personality. The body will be fair or foul, strong or weak, according as would best express the character of the person it serves. It will bear on it scars, indeed, but they will be the scars of self-inflicted moral wounds, rather than of physical wounds inflicted from without—these latter may often be the nail-prints of a cross transfigured into lines of ineffable beauty. That new body will automatically "bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the heart"—either for glory or for shame.

There is no reason to suppose that the mere act of dying, as such, will bring about any miraculous change in our characters or ideals, but it will in our bodies; and it will completely revolutionise our circumstances. It will be the great revealer. We shall all of us be "found out." The tyrant will have lost his throne, the success-

ful swindler will no longer impress his friends and even enemies by the splendour of his country seat, the sensualist may still have the itch for base excitement but not the means to gratify it, the selfish beauty will have forfeited her charms, the self-advertising quack will have left behind his reputation. In this world there are always some who look upon the rake as "dashing," the bully as a superman, the Pharisee as a saint; but, clothed in a body which really expresses their character, they will all of them be "found out." That is why in the next world, though it will be possible for the good to help the evil, it will be less possible for the evil to hurt the good; for a person or an ideal which has been "found out" has lost the power to seduce.

To be "found out" is an acute humiliation. It is painful in exact proportion to a man's vanity, selfishness, self-complacency, and to the degree of respect or admiration he has previously enjoyed. But it often has one salutary result. To be "found out" by other people sometimes leads to the finding out of oneself. The folly, meanness, cruelty, and contemptibility of our own conduct often first really comes home to us when we see how it strikes other people. And to discover that one is not merely contemned but contemptible is the greatest humiliation of all. But real self-knowledge, painful as it is, is the first step towards reformation.

Partly for this reason, partly because it is natural to think of the next life as a society in which the good will be able to influence the evil, we may hope that many, of whose character in this life we are tempted to despair, may have the chance of a fresh start—at however low a level; and may yet struggle upwards—at the cost of however great effort and humiliation. A "fresh start" under new conditions is often in this world an opportunity for moral advance. A boy who has got into bad odour at school not infrequently turns out well at the University; and some who have been a failure at the University make a success of life in a

changed environment. But in such cases the shock of change, the presence of new interests, the influence of better friends are only able to effect a reformation where there is present sufficient moral insight to appreciate, at any rate to some extent, the new interests and the better friends, and where there is a dawning perception (which, be it noted, often follows rather than precedes the first stages of reformation) that he has previously "made a fool of himself."

Unless some perception of a higher ideal can be awakened, no recognition of the error of previous ways and no amendment is possible. It is often forgotten that the result of wrong doing or wrong thinking is to blunt and blind the conscience. The worse a man gets the less is he conscious of the fact; the more selfish and self-centred he becomes the less he is aware of it. Hence, if the inevitable "finding out" by others which will result on entering into the next world, the shock which this will bring, and the kindly influence of the better spirits he will find there do not sooner or later bring such an one to recognise the bankruptcy of his old ideals and the contemptibility of his old self, its effect will be the reverse of redemptive. To be despised for what one thinks to be one's excellence, to be pitied for that of which one is most proud, to be convinced that admiration, affection, and respect are one's due, and to receive the contrary, is to suffer acutely; but it is the suffering not of Purgatory but of Hell—for it is suffering which is not redemptive but wholly profitless.[1] It is the inevitable consequence of egotism in its extreme development that it makes a man unable to perceive his own nature, and that therefore he cannot but regard himself as an instance of merit unappreciated and goodness misunderstood; and he becomes ever more and more sensitive and more and more resentful. But if a man once repents and recognises past suffering as deserved, even suffering which was resented and therefore profit-

[1] For a further development of this point cf. *Concerning Prayer*, pp. 30-33.

less at the time may in retrospect be made redemptive. So long as a man has the faintest perception of an ideal that is higher than that which is expressed in his own life there is a chance of reformation—that is why the publican, though of a lower standard of actual achievement, is more hopeful than the Pharisee. For the incurably selfish, however, if such there be, there must be an experience of Hell, that is to say, a period of inevitable but wholly profitless suffering. But a recognition of this fact does not bind us to suppose that, as a matter of fact, any cases will be found to be ultimately incurable; or that, if so, the Hell in which they will have necessarily lived for a time will not ultimately be ended by their annihilation. On this point I should wish to associate myself entirely with the view expressed in Essay V.

But the Judgment will not be all of one kind. Not only will the evil be "found out," the good will also be revealed for what they are. And this will mean that many of the apparent failures of this life will be seen in a very different light. The rank and file of brave, cheerful, kindly, dutiful, hard-working men and women may stand out as more admirable than some whom the world regards as saints and heroes. The soldier who could not take the trench, the unknown researcher who just failed to make the great discovery but paved the way for some one else, the

> village Hampden who, with dauntless breast,
> The little tyrant of his fields withstood;

all these will be "discovered"—much to their own surprise. "Lord, when saw we thee hungry and fed thee?" they will exclaim with astonishment. Mirrored in the eyes of those around they will see themselves transfigured, and with astonished ears will hear echoing from lip to lip the cry of welcome, "Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

IV

THE LIFE OF THE WORLD TO COME

BY

B. H. STREETER

SYNOPSIS

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IV

THE LIFE OF THE WORLD TO COME

PART I

THE CONDITIONS OF THE LIFE BEYOND THE PRESENT

The Need of a Definite Conception

Among educated people it is recognised that the traditional language about a Heaven "above the bright blue sky" or a Hell beneath the earth can only be accepted as figurative. We are commonly told that we ought to think of Heaven, "not as a place but as a state," and that the harps, palms, and crowns are merely symbols. The phrase, "not a place but a state," is only half satisfactory, but for the moment we may accept it and note that it applies also to Purgatory and Hell, supposing we feel bound to retain either or both of these conceptions in our creed. But, if we are frankly to abandon the old mental pictures and really begin to ask what we mean when we say that Heaven is not a place but a state, it behoves us to ask with no slight insistence what kind of state we mean. If we dismiss the old imagery as merely symbol we are the more bound to ask what kind of a thing does it symbolise?

This question is one to which no final and no cut-and-dried answer is possible, or even desirable. But it

is well worth while to make a resolute attempt to arrive at an answer as clear and definite as is practicable in view of the nature of the enquiry and of the limitations of human experience and imagination. This attempt is no mere interesting exercise in academic speculation, it is a vital necessity for religion and life. The old conceptions of Heaven and Hell which were developed by the early and mediaeval Church, partly from hints in the New Testament, but mainly on the basis of ideas inherited from pre-Christian Jewish Apocalyptic, had the great merit that they presented vivid pictures of the nature of the world to come,—pictures clear and definite enough to fire the imagination, to convince the intellect, and thereby to mould the aspirations and influence the conduct of mankind. At the present day these conceptions are intellectually discredited, even at the level of education which the Elementary School has made universal. They cannot be galvanised into fresh life.

Contemporary religion has no more pressing need than the thinking out and popularisation of new ways of presenting to the mind an idea of what is meant by the Christian hope of immortality, clear and definite enough to do for our generation what the symbols and pictures inherited from Jewish Apocalyptic did for our fathers. The lack of clear and reasoned guiding conceptions as to the nature of the Future Life is, I am confident, at the root of most of the widespread doubt and disbelief in immortality at the present day. People do not believe in a future life because the forms in which the belief has been presented to their minds seem, on the one hand, to be intellectually untenable, and, on the other, to be unattractive or even repellent. Traditional pictures of Hell seem morally revolting; while the Heaven of Sunday School teaching or popular hymnology is a place which the plain man does not believe to exist, and which he would not want to go to if it did.

This paper is an attempt to think out the implications of the New Testament conception of Eternal Life in the light of the changed intellectual background of the present day. It is put forward not with the dogmatism of one who proclaims unchallengeable results, but rather as a suggestion of the lines along which the solution of an admittedly difficult problem may be looked for. As such it is submitted, and as such I would ask that it be judged.

Quality of Life, Locality, and Progress

At the outset I must observe that if, as has been argued in the previous paper, existence in the next life as in this must be thought of as existence in space, the proposition that Heaven must be thought of rather as a state than as a place can only be accepted if it means that Heaven must not be thought of as one particular and definite place situated locally above the sky—a conception which belongs to an age which believed the earth to be the centre of the Universe. The discovery that the earth is not the centre of the Universe, but a mere speck in a corner of it, one world out of many millions, does not mean that we must eliminate the notion of place from our conception of any life beyond the present. On the contrary, it means that we must infinitely enlarge our conception of the amount of room there is and of the number of places which the Universe contains. It thus becomes thinkable that in the next life we may have the power of easy and rapid movement from world to world; or may have our home, as it were, in some one world with the power of visiting or communicating with this and other worlds. We know nothing about the spatial conditions of the next life, but it is important to insist that we are in no way bound, because we discard the old Apocalyptic Heaven above "this solid bowl we call the sky," to rob our conception of the next life of that element of space

and spaciousness which must be preserved if we are to attempt to imagine it at all.

The value of the proposition that Heaven must be thought of "not as a place but as a state" lies in the positive not in the negative part of the sentence; for, though we can only make the merest guess at the spatial conditions of the next life, we can, if we are at pains to think out what is implicit in the fundamental ideas of the New Testament, arrive at very clear and definite ideas as to the state or *quality of life* enjoyed by the righteous in the world to come. In the second part of this Essay I shall show that in the last resort the New Testament idea of Heaven is thought out less in terms of place than in terms of *quality of life*, and I shall endeavour to give clearness and definition to this conception. But, before doing this, it is worth while to point out certain very important consequences which follow if we take as the basis of our idea of the world beyond the present the conception of *quality of life*.

So long as Heaven, Purgatory, and Hell are thought of mainly in terms of place, they must necessarily be thought of as entirely separate one from the other, so that a person who is in one could have little or no communication with a person in the other. Again, along with the idea of three different places goes naturally (if not in strict logic) the idea of three distinct states of desert and happiness separable from one another by clear, definite, hard and fast lines. But if we take quality of life instead of locality as the starting-point of our conception of the Beyond, these hard and fast distinctions and divisions immediately disappear, with two important results.

First, between Dives and Lazarus there may be still a great gulf fixed, but the gulf is one of quality of life, expressing itself in feeling and character; it is not one which is constituted by distance in space. Once think away these local conceptions and it would be as possible for saint and sinner to get into personal contact in the

next world if they desired, as it is in this world for a successful and a disappointed lover to be members of the same house party, though one may be in Abraham's bosom and the other in a state of torment. This consideration removes what is a very real difficulty to many minds. Take, for example, the case of a good mother who has a worthless son. It is impossible that both can, in the traditional phrase, "go to Heaven"; yet it is equally impossible that Heaven should be Heaven to the mother if the son is not there. Take away, however, the idea of locality from conceptions like Heaven, Purgatory, or Hell, and we see that, however different may be the inner state or quality of life led by the mother and the son, they can still be in personal correspondence. The mother may yet be able to do something towards restoring and reforming the son — a possibility which not merely suggests a solution of some of the problems of this life, but also gives a concrete illustration of what we mean by saying that in the next world there will still remain work to be done and an opportunity for love and service. But of this more will be said later on.

Secondly, if we think away the implications of locality associated with the old ideas of Heaven, Purgatory, and Hell, there seems no reason to maintain the notion that there are three and only three clearly defined "states" in the next life. If we think of the future in terms of quality of life we should naturally suppose that there would be an infinite number of degrees in quality, shading off into one another, and that this would mean a possibility of progress—certainly a progress upward, probably also (though this is less certain) downward. This consideration meets a difficulty widely felt, which is commonly expressed in this form: "The great majority of people seem when they die to be neither good enough for Heaven nor bad enough for Hell." To this difficulty there is no satisfactory answer unless we assume the possibility of Progress in the life to

come. But if we surrender the notion of three distinct and definite denominations, there is no reason why we should not make Progress one of the most fundamental and characteristic elements in our conception of the future life.

Purgatory

The idea of Progress, however, in the world to come must be clearly distinguished from the doctrine of Purgatory, at any rate as understood in the Roman Church. Even if the materialistic conceptions and superstitious observances which have gathered round it in popular belief are removed, there are in the officially accepted doctrine of Purgatory two points which are open to serious objection. Firstly, it is held that at the moment of death it is decided whether the soul is ultimately destined for Heaven or Hell. If for Heaven, at that moment its character is transformed by supernatural grace so as to make it completely and finally fit for the place it is destined to hold there. Secondly, the pains of Purgatory are not, though the derivation of the word suggests it, held to effect a moral purification of the soul. They are purely penal, and constitute as it were the repayment in the next life in a currency of pain of a debt which has been incurred in this life in a currency of sin.[1] The postulate of a miraculous transformation of character at the moment of death, and the purely vindictive debtor and creditor conception of Divine justice, leave a Purgatory so conceived open to quite as many objections as the traditional Protestant dichotomy of the future life into Heaven or Hell.

Outside the Roman Church, the word Purgatory is often used in its ancient mediaeval sense to denote a state of real progress and moral purification. There is

[1] An eminent Roman Catholic theologian tells me that the present dominance of this view is largely due to the influence of the great Spanish Jesuit Suarez. Cf. also Fr. von Hügel, *The Mystical Element in Religion*, pp. 240 f.

much to be said for a revival of such an idea. It will, however, be of little value so long as the main emphasis is laid either on the idea of getting rid of undesirable qualities in the soul or on the element of pain which that process will require. These two false tendencies are due, partly to the wholly unchristian emphasis on the purely negative element in morality which has pervaded so much of the practical teaching of the pulpit and the Sunday School, partly to a misconception of the part played by suffering in the development of character.

So long as Christian teaching puts the avoidance of evil before enthusiasm for good, thus overlaying the Gospel with the Law, Purgatory will be thought of in the same negative way. But what is really wanted is a conception of a Progress in the next life in which the leading idea shall be that of addition rather than of subtraction, and which will emphasise the need of enriching that which is good in the character rather than merely the purging away of that which is evil. We are often misled by our metaphors: moral evil is not a stain that can be removed by a negative and external process like washing or burning. It is rather a disease of the will which can only be cured by a restoration to health, which is a positive process akin to growth.

Again, moral growth inevitably and of course involves an element of pain; for repentance and the recognition of the real nature of one's own misconduct is a necessary condition of such growth. And the realisation of the contemptibility of one's own character, and of the extent and real character of the wrong one has done, which is an essential preliminary to repentance, is not likely to be less painful in the world to come than it is in this. And the more there is to repent of, the more lasting and the more acute must be the pain. But Christianity associates forgiveness with repentance; and in the most

characteristically Christian teaching the joy of the forgiven is not held to be a lesser thing than the pain of the penitent. Suffering also of other kinds, if rightly borne, plays an important part in the development of character. But this is only one side of the matter. Dazzled by the discovery of the supreme value of suffering rightly borne, too many of the saints have been blind both to the intrinsic and to the educative value of joy. Hence Christianity has unfortunately come to be associated in many minds with a refusal of the *joie de vivre*, and with a denial both of the intrinsic value and of the beneficent function in the development of character of simple pleasure, cheerfulness, and humour. But may we not hope that that portion of the Church of Christ which has gone before has recovered from this delusion?

Progress and Attainment

Assuming, then, that the idea of Progress is an essential element in our conception of the life to come, a further question at once arises. Progress implies direction. If it be true that most people when they die are neither good enough for Heaven nor bad enough for Hell, are we to suppose that movement in the life to come will be in both directions? Will the person whose life in this world seems to be a steady development in the direction of increasing moral blindness and deliberate rejection of good and light have a chance of amendment in the next? And, if so, supposing he rejects this second opportunity, will the process of degeneration ultimately reach its logical climax? In other words, does Hell exist; and, if so, what is it like and who, if any one, will go there? This is an intensely important question, but as I have already indicated (pp. 128 f.) the kind of answer I should be disposed to give to it, and as other aspects of it are discussed in Essay V. of this volume, I will pass it by and confine

my attention to the meaning of the idea of Progress in the upward direction.

We are at once brought up against the question, Is there such a thing as a final and perfect Heaven? The very idea of Progress seems to imply an ultimate goal towards which the advance is being made. Hence, strict logic seems to demand an ultimate Heaven in the sense of a final goal for achieved perfection. We human beings strive for perfection and we long for rest; but, on the other hand, when we think of it, the idea of an eternity of existence in a static state of achieved perfection seems intolerable. The fact that, in such a state, nothing would remain to be hoped for, and nothing would be left to be done, implies to many minds the negation of one of the fundamental conditions of happiness. The human heart has an insatiable demand for apparently inconsistent things—activity and repose, achievement and pursuit. We may go a little deeper and say that the mind and will of man is essentially creative, and that creation implies both the existence of an end which it is possible to attain and the fact that it is not yet attained. The difficulty (which, be it noted, is the same as the standing philosophical difficulty of getting a conception of the Divine Being which will include both perfection and activity) is one which does not admit of solution within the limits of analogies suggested by our present experience. But, for practical purposes, we may leave it on one side.

Experience shows that the result of any advance towards a goal which is clearly seen, whether in knowledge, in artistic achievement, or in morals, leads to the discovery of a goal and of an ideal beyond that originally perceived. And, in this world at any rate, it is the case that those who have made most progress in any department are also those who recognise most clearly the infinite distance which still separates them from their ideal. Every achievement brings with it an enhancement of the ideal to be achieved. Not only that, but

we grow more rapidly in our perception of the character and richness of the ideal than in our achievement of what we have perceived. The distance between the starting-point and the goal perceived increases rather than diminishes as we advance; and it is probable that this would not be otherwise in the life to come. As far ahead as, and further than, our imaginations can picture, fresh vistas and richer possibilities will open up, new heights to climb will continue to loom in sight. And long before we have reached that finality which strict logic seems to postulate, we may expect to have attained an insight into the ultimate nature of reality which will enable us to apprehend the solution of this as well as of many other problems to which no answer seems now forthcoming.

It would seem, therefore, that if our speculations with regard to the future life are to have any practical value, it would be well to confine them to the attempt to make more precise our ideas of what that state of life will be which follows *immediately* on the present. Even if we feel bound to postulate the existence of a final and ultimate state of perfection, in our present state of knowledge and with even our imaginations limited by the experience of this world, speculations as to its nature are worthless. In what follows, therefore, I shall endeavour merely to ask whether it is possible to discover any principles which will enable us to realise in a more concrete way the nature and character of the life which immediately follows the present, and, as before remarked, I shall simplify the problem by leaving out of account the question of the fate of the unrepentant sinner as being sufficiently dealt with elsewhere in this volume.

If, as I suggest, we confine our attention to the conception of what I may call the *proximate* as distinguished from the *ultimate* Heaven, we are relieved of the necessity of any further discussion of the difficult question of the relation of Time to Eternity, and its bearing on

the nature of the future life. The conception of an existence outside Time is one which baffles the imagination. It provides, no doubt, a solution to certain difficult problems of philosophy, but, to my own mind, it creates as many or nearly as many as it solves, and I feel a reluctance to commit myself to an opinion as to whether an existence out of Time either is or is not a possibility, even in the case of God. But I think that it is unnecessary to do so, for the question is really irrelevant to the particular enquiry on which we are engaged. Time may possibly not be a condition of the life of God. If so, it may not be a condition of the life of Heaven—if by Heaven we mean that final state of achieved perfection which we may perhaps be bound to postulate as the ultimate goal of progress—though, for the reasons urged in the previous Essay,[1] I incline to doubt it. But the quest on which we are now engaged is not an attempt to imagine for ourselves the nature of existence in this *ultimate* Heaven, if such there be, but merely in a *proximate* Heaven, *i.e.* in that long period of progress which we have agreed will follow this present life. In this proximate Heaven Time is a necessity as much as it is for life on earth, for progress is impossible except in Time. I hold, therefore, that whatever philosophical view we adopt as to the ultimate relation of Time and Eternity, we are not only justified but bound to think of the life immediately after death as life in Time, even if the view be accepted, which personally I incline to think erroneous, that we ought not to think of it in terms of space.

[1] Cf. pp. 96 ff.

PART II

THE NATURE OF ETERNAL LIFE

God, Man, and Christ

In the previous Essay it has been shown that the proof of personal Immortality rests in the last resort on the Christian conception of the character of God. Our view of the nature and quality of the life of the world to come is equally determined by this same thing. The life of those in Heaven must be thought of as a participation in the Divine life as full as is compatible with their still remaining finite human beings. We must first of all, then, ask what clear and certain knowledge have we as to the character and quality of the Divine life? This at once brings us up against the question, What do we mean by saying that God is revealed in Christ? Only in so far as we grasp the real meaning of this central feature in Christianity shall we be able to make any progress at all in our present quest. Hence a summary statement on this subject seems to be a necessary preliminary to any further enquiry.

The notion that the same Person could be both completely divine and completely human, *perfectus Deus, perfectus Homo*, as the Athanasian Creed puts it, is one which presented insurmountable intellectual difficulties to the mind of that Greco-Roman world to which the early Church had to endeavour to explain and justify its belief. Most of the doctrinal disputes and heresies of the first five centuries were due to the fact that no conception of the Person of Christ seemed intellectually tenable to the average educated man of the time which did not make out that Christ was either less than fully divine, or else not really and truly human. The moral and religious insight, however, of the Christian community could not rest satisfied with any view which

seemed to impair, however subtly, the full reality either of His humanity or of His divinity. Hence, since the philosophy of the day was inadequate to suggest any explanation which was intellectually satisfactory, the Church was driven to affirm the complete personal union of the two natures as an inexplicable mystery to be accepted by faith. And it was defended by definitions which aimed less at offering a satisfactory explanation of what was believed than at ruling out such unsatisfactory explanations as had up to that date been formulated.

During the last century, however, it has been becoming more and more clear that the intellectual difficulties felt in the matter by the ancient world—and, indeed, by the majority of people in the modern world—were due to the fact that an attempt was being made to solve the problem of the relation of God and man in Christ while leaving uncriticised pre-Christian conceptions of the nature both of God and man. If the same Person is both completely divine and completely human, it follows that both God and man are very different beings from what is commonly supposed; there must be in man possibilities as yet unrealised, and in God actualities as yet unsuspected. So far as man was concerned this was early recognised, especially by the Alexandrian Fathers. Athanasius' famous "He became human that we might be made divine" states in a word what was an accepted tenet of his school. But it has taken a much longer time to realise that the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ necessitates a far more drastic revolution in pre-Christian (and, indeed, in most current) conceptions of God than in pre-Christian conceptions of man. Before Christ, the Jew had pictured God as a monarch living in gorgeous splendour, surrounded by celestial state and pomp, the embodiment of power, magnificence, and splendour. The Greek had looked on Him as the Absolute Being of philosophy, immutable, impassible, who could not be thought of

even as Creator unless He worked through an intermediary. But neither of these is the God whom Christ called Father; neither of these is the God of whom Christ is the "image" here on earth.

Athanasius made a heroic effort to save the Church from invasion by the extreme form of the half Greek, half Jewish conception of God which Arianism stood for. But he did not go far enough in the direction of thinking out the full implications of his main contention, that the Son is really and essentially Divine and that what we see in Him is the substance and not the shadow of the Divine life. Indeed, no man educated in Greek Philosophy and accepting the Old Testament as verbally inspired could have gone further than he did. Great men should be honoured for what they did, not blamed for what they left undone. But the present age, unshackled by that philosophy and taught by the Higher Criticism to see in the Old Testament not one single authoritative revelation but a long struggle towards ever higher and higher conceptions of the Divine, can, and—if it is not to turn its back on Athanasius—*must* go further forward along the road he fought and suffered so much to keep unbarred.

The inherent logic of the doctrine of the Incarnation necessitates a revaluation of the natural man's ideas, not merely of things on earth, but also of things in Heaven. If the Son of Man on earth repudiated the methods and ideals of the Kings of the Gentiles who lord and strut, if He taught that he who is the greatest on earth must be servant of all, and that the King of Kings is He who dies for all; and if Christ is, as St. Paul puts it, "the portrait of the unseen God,"[1] then that must mean that God and the life of Heaven are not what we are apt to fancy. If "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God is to be seen in the face of Jesus Christ," then the glory of God must be a very different thing from what most of us would otherwise suppose. If the life of

[1] Εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου, Col. i. 15.

Christ on earth is the picture in time of something which is eternal in the life of God, then God Himself is seen to share the suffering of the world and, at the cost of His own agony, to be overcoming the evil in it. And the pomp and circumstance, the dignity and domination, which seem to us magnificent and grand, are shown to be a hollow fraud. A revolution in our scheme of values is effected which at once puts down the mighty from their seat and exalts the inconspicuous and the quiet.

But, if this be so, it follows that the popular conception of Heaven errs, not so much through being symbolic—that is inevitable—as from the fact that its symbolism suggests as the dominant characteristic of the life of Heaven something lower than what Christ taught us is the highest life on earth. It has in it too much of Solomon in all his glory, too little of the beauty of the lilies of the field. At its lower levels it suggests the splendour of an Imperial court, and even at its highest level it has left out something vital. Painters, preachers, hymn-writers, starting from St. John's vision of the Adoration of the Lamb or from a glorified reminiscence of High Mass in some great cathedral, have tried to depict a Heaven compact of awe, sublimity, and the rapture of mystic adoration. Heaven must include these, but it must include much more. We cannot conceive of a Heaven in which Christ would be content to dwell unless there was to be found in it the counterpart of other things He loved on earth, the wild flowers and the birds, the children playing, friends gathered round the common board, the fellowship of labour and of love, and the quiet hour on the mountain-side at dawn.

Eternal Life

If, then, we take our stand upon the doctrine of the Incarnation, we see at once that the life of the world to come must be thought of as differing from the highest kind of life which we know on earth in degree rather

than in kind. And this, be it noted, is exactly how it is thought of in the Gospel of St. John. The conception of Eternal Life in this Gospel gives us exactly the guiding principle we want if we are to attain any clear, definite, and vital notion of the nature and quality of the life of the world to come. To him we call St. John, Eternal Life is something of which we can already experience a foretaste in this world; it is a life to which death is not an interruption but rather the removal of restrictions and impediments; it is a life of which the important characteristic is, not the place where it is lived, but the quality of the life itself.

Eternal Life is said, by the author of the fourth Gospel, to consist in "the knowledge of God and of His Son Jesus Christ." What does this imply? Not, surely, or at any rate not in the first place, philosophic understanding of the nature of the Supreme Being or historical information about the historic Jesus, such as one may get by reading books or hearing discourses. The knowledge of God and Christ which St. John speaks of is such an intimacy with, such an appropriation of, the personal Divine life revealed in Christ, that he who has it sees eye to eye with Christ, loves the things that He loves, shares His sense of values. The life, then, of the world to come must be thought of, not in terms of average life on earth, but only of the highest life on earth; and our test of what is highest on earth is to be determined by that standard of value which we have learnt from Christ.

The modern man, who is not habituated to expressing the ideals which most appeal to him in religious phraseology, will be disposed to define the highest life as consisting in absolute devotion to the triad Goodness, Beauty, and Truth. Is this essentially different from St. John's definition, "the Knowledge of God and His Son Jesus Christ"? It is possible to be devoted to Goodness, Beauty, or Truth without any conscious or explicit reference to God or Christ; but, in so far as

one or all of these are thought of and pursued apart from any conscious recognition of the one Divine in which they have their source and final harmony, there is something incompletely realised. It cannot be too often insisted that all disinterested devotion to Goodness, Beauty, or Truth is really and truly (whether the devotee is aware of it or not) a recognition of, and an act of service to, the One Divine, from whom these flow and in whom they have their unifying principle and ultimate explanation. On the other hand, it must be no less emphasised that it is not possible really to know and serve God unless we recognise Him, not only as the Personal Reality over and above the totality of things, but also as actually present and directly manifested through nature and through man in the actual world given to us by sense and thought.[1]

If the present life be regarded as a pilgrimage, a preparation for the life of the world to come, our expectations of what will be the chief activities of the next life cannot but influence our idea of what ought to be our chief activity in this. The widespread idea that life in Heaven is to be thought of as one unending act of undifferentiated religious adoration has undoubtedly led to a narrowing of the conception of the meaning of sanctity on earth—with disastrous consequences. The great tragedy of Christianity in modern times has been, not its failure to attract or retain the allegiance of the vain, the frivolous, and the materially minded, but its failure to appeal to the idealist of to-day. And this has been to no small extent due to the fact that the ideal which the Church has held up to—or perhaps, to speak more accurately, that aspect of the ideal life which it has been most successful in effectively bringing home to—the imagination of Europe has been narrow and one-sided.

In a matter of moral and spiritual values deliberately to challenge what at first sight seems to be the verdict

[1] For the further working out of this idea, see my Essay on "Worship" in *Concerning Prayer*.

of the saints, may appear a rash proceeding. I would maintain, however, that what I am challenging is not the verdict of the *consensus sanctorum*, but, at most, the verdict of that section of the saints whom ecclesiastical authority has seen fit to canonise. Nor is it really even this. In the case of many of the canonised saints the nearer we get to their authentic biographies the wider and richer do we find was the ideal in accordance with which they actually lived, and the less conspicuous and dominating an element in their lives is that particular set of interests and activities which are conventionally associated with the idea of sanctity. We not infrequently find, too, that the saints themselves lamented as a weakness what was really breadth of moral vision, and, in deference to the authority of traditional views, deplored what they supposed to be a failure in themselves to the extent of making considerable and ill-judged efforts to force their thoughts, tastes, and desires into accordance with the conventional pattern. The latter part of the life of St. Francis of Assisi is a notable case. And biographers have been even more active in this direction, and have often completely succeeded in doing on paper what the saint was fortunately unable to accomplish in real life.[1]

Again, the interpretation of their experiences given by the great Mystics has often been to some extent vitiated—probably even the actual form of the experience itself has been to some extent perverted—by a conception of the nature of the Divine derived ultimately from Plotinus. The concrete conception of a richly personal, a feeling and acting Deity, which the Biblical writers are all agreed in holding, is really in marked contrast to the Neo-Platonic idea that God is one whom we can best conceive of by denying to Him any of the qualities or attributes of which we have

[1] Contrast the Life of St. Francis by S. Bonaventura with the *Speculum Perfectionis* or the first Life of Celano. I am inclined to accept the view of Sabatier as to the later life of St. Francis as *in the main* correct in spite of the great authority of Father Cuthbert.

experience; and that He is a Being whom we can, therefore, best draw near to by cutting ourselves off from all interest in earthly things. The substitution of the Neo-Platonic for the Christian idea of God could not but have important consequences. True, few, if any, of the Mediaeval Saints effected more than a partial substitution between the two views. In practice they tried to combine them. But the effect of the Neo-Platonic element in their theology, and the ascetic element in their practice, has profoundly affected, and that not for the better, the traditional conception of the Beatific Vision. The *via negativa* which, on its intellectual side, will only think of God in negative categories, and which, on its practical side, mainly seeks Him by turning its back on the ordinary life of mankind, cannot but introduce an element of abstraction and monotony into our conception of what is the highest life of the spirit in the next life as in this.

Something more is said on this subject in the concluding section of the last Essay in this volume, so all I would emphasise here is that the life of God must not only be *said* to be, but actually *imagined* as something fuller, richer, and more alive, as something more concrete, not less so, than the life of man; and that the life of Heaven must be thought of as more, not less, teeming with varied content than that of earth. Life here would be intolerable without variety, and the life of a world which is better than this would have in it more and not less variety than that of this world.

One of the reasons why so few people are interested in the Heaven of popular Theology is that the picture it presents to the imagination of the life of the blessed suggests a life of unbroken monotony. There are those who would defend, or at any rate palliate, the traditional picture by reminding us that in supreme moments, whether of adoration or otherwise, we seem to be lifted as it were out of Time into Eternity and to feel that we could be content could such a moment

be prolonged infinitely. But our more sober reflection tells us that even if this were the case there are supreme moments of different qualities and different characters, and we would enjoy not one but all of these. There is the moment when the discovery of new truth dawns upon the seeker—

> Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
> When a new planet swims into his ken ;

there is the moment of entrancement at the vision of perfect beauty ; there is the moment of the union of soul and soul in love. The passion of religious adoration may interpenetrate and transcend, and, in that sense, may include, all these, yet, unless they are experienced seriatim and in separation, something of supreme value will be lost for ever. And this variety is needed, because the value of supreme moments lies not only in themselves, but also in their permanent and abiding consequences in the enrichment and elevation of the whole life—and that a life which is meant to be lived not in isolation but in harmony with other souls. To dwell over much on the hilltops of supreme individualistic experiences, and to interpret their meaning and value in the light of an overmastering conception such as that of "the Alone with the Alone," is ultimately to impoverish them. That which cannot be shared with others—if not directly, at least in its results—may possibly be good but it is not the best.

Why was it that of all the symbols current at the time for expressing the joy of the coming Age, our Lord so frequently selected the most homely and seemingly the most material—the common meal, the Supper to which a certain man invited his friends, the table round which we shall "sit at meat" in the Kingdom with present friends and with the great souls of the past? Why on that night when He was to be betrayed had He desired with desire to eat that passover, and, failing that, why did He break the bread and pass the cup

of which He was to drink no more till He drank a new kind in the world to come? Surely it all means that to Him the frank, free union in love and friendship, perhaps most often seen on earth round the familiar board—that Kingdom which consists not in eating or drinking, but in righteousness and peace and joy, in that Spirit which was the spirit in and by which He lived Himself—is the highest thing on earth, and is, therefore, a foretaste of the life of Heaven. The nearest thing to Heaven that we can attain on earth is the experience of love and fellowship, of the complete harmony of mind with mind and heart with heart, between those who feel themselves to be lifted out of and above themselves, not only by the depth of their personal affection but by their passionate devotion to some common interest or ideal. This may be found on earth without any religious bond explicitly so called, but wherever that is the case I would affirm that there is really an apprehension and realisation of the Divine Presence even though it be unrecognised as such. But it is only when personal affection and consecration to a great ideal finds its natural consummation in conscious fellowship in the experience of the Divine Presence that we can understand what St. John means by Eternal Life and can "know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren."

The Content of the Idea of Heaven

I will now proceed to work out in rather more detail the conception of the character of the life of the world to come which follows if, accepting the scheme of values implied in the doctrine of the Incarnation, we think out the full meaning of St. John's view of Eternal Life. And lest I be thought to be attempting to read my own personal hopes or foibles into the next life, I will, in every case, base what I advance on some outstanding passage in the New Testament.

Love

No thought is more fundamental to the teaching of the New Testament than that the ideal of goodness itself and all the rules of morality are merely divers expressions of the one inward passion of beneficent desire and activity to which is given the name Love. To the Master, Love God, love thy neighbour, are the great commandments. "Love," says St. Paul, "is the fulfilment of the law."

In the famous hymn to Charity in 1 Cor. xiii. St. Paul develops the great idea that, whereas all other activities—prophecies, tongues, and the like—are relative to the temporary and transient conditions of life on earth, Love is the great exception, "Love never faileth." This, and this alone, will be precisely of the same kind in Heaven as it is on earth. It is a commonplace of philosophers that we cannot think of God as exhibiting the cardinal virtues except in a symbolic sense; for the very meaning of qualities like courage, temperance, or even justice, is relative both to our personal limitations and the limitations of our earthly environment. It is otherwise with the principle of Love—that is why it is possible that in the character of the Ideal Man the very essence of the Divine should be manifest on earth. And the Love which St. Paul speaks of as that which will not fail or be changed into something very different in the world to come is not the love of man to God—that is not with most of us an experience vivid enough to illuminate an unknown world—but the love of man to man.

The life, therefore, of the world to come must be thought of as life in a society—the New Jerusalem, the Kingdom of God, the Communion of Saints; call it what you will. And the most conspicuous feature of that society will be not merely that the exercise of active love will be as possible there as it is on earth, but that the love will be of an intenser quality, will lavish itself

on a wider range of persons, and will be able to express itself more freely and in more diverse ways. Gesture and speech, which as often disguise as reveal our real meaning, may perhaps be superseded, at least they will be supplemented, by an acuter sympathy and insight which shall make impossible the uncertainties, misunderstandings, and embarrassments which hinder love on earth or restrict its range to narrow circles. A society in which every individual thought and did exactly the same would not be a society; individuality, therefore, diversity of character, capacity, and taste, must still remain. But the differences will no longer be a source of strain and friction but will be united into one great harmony like the notes of the very various instruments in a great orchestra.

Work

"My father worketh hitherto and I work," our Lord is reported to have said to those who objected to His healing on the Sabbath day. Creation, the making that to be which hitherto has not been, is not to be thought of as something which God did once for all in a remote past but as a constant eternal activity. And some shadow, some counterpart of this creative faculty has been given to man on earth. The farmer, the builder, the inventor, the artist, are all in a sense creators. They bring into existence that which, but for them, would not have been. This creative capacity and activity of man—an activity so valuable that we can see in it a shadow and counterpart of the eternal and characteristic life of God—shall it not continue in the world to come? It must continue, though exercising itself on different materials and adapting itself to ends differing from those of which we now have experience, as much as the present work of one who designs an Atlantic liner differs from the making of paper boats which occupied his childhood. What exactly the work

will be which we have to do we cannot even profitably guess; but there will surely be different kinds of work for different kinds of people. And for some, if not for all, we may suppose that part of it will consist in labour for the souls of those who have entered the next life lower down in the moral scale than themselves. And why may not the work of some be to watch over and inspire the lives of loved ones still on earth?

Thought

"Now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." The pursuit of truth along the line of scientific investigation, though existent in the Greek-speaking world, had probably never been a very serious interest in the circles in which St. Paul had lived. A wider and more dominant interest of his age was the passion for truth along the line of philosophic enquiry. Here, again, St. Paul's early education had probably only brought him in contact with the outskirts of this movement. Though born at Tarsus he had been trained a Pharisee; and though the Pharisees were genuinely interested in righteousness, they supposed they had already attained all the truth that they required. Yet, in spite of this, a passionate interest in the ultimate nature of reality flashes continually through his words; it is the presupposition of his change of faith and the inspiration of all his preaching of righteousness. True, he never elaborated a systematic philosophy of religion, but he produced creative thought which no subsequent philosophy has been able to neglect. To the Corinthians, indeed, corrupted by the conceit of a shallow intellectualism, he will preach only the Cross of Christ. He declines to gratify them with logomachies. But he tells them that, for the initiated, he has a philosophy. And when in the hymn to Charity he contrasts love

with knowledge to the detriment of the latter, it is not because he thinks poorly of knowledge and its pursuit. Quite the contrary. It is precisely because he rates knowledge of the truth so high that in praise of love he says that love is higher *even* than knowledge. And what he looks for in the world to come is, not the abolition of the interest in truth, but its full and complete fruition. The notion that the activity of the reason in the pursuit of truth is something on which Religion should look askance runs counter not only to St. Paul's teaching but to that of all the greatest Christian thinkers. St. Thomas Aquinas, indeed, goes so far as to say that the Beatific Vision is an activity of the intellect, *actus intellectus*, and indeed an activity of the speculative rather than of the practical intellect, and more than once adopts to describe it St. Augustine's phrase, "*gaudium de veritate.*" [1]

Beauty

The apprehension and enjoyment of the Beautiful is that element in the ideal state of existence which traditional apocalyptic conceptions of Heaven have been fairly successful in bringing home to the popular mind. The glorious vision of the descent of the New Jerusalem which concludes the Book of Revelation, the sublime poetry of which no amount of over-literal and materialistic interpretation could disguise, is mainly responsible for this relative success. But though the apprehension of sublimer forms of beauty must be a necessary element in our conception of the future life, the sublime alone will not suffice. The highest and most complete activity of the aesthetic instinct demands for its satisfaction not merely the grandeur of an Alpine vista, of an Indian sunset, or of a great Cathedral, but the

[1] Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, Prima Secundae, iii. 4. I have no desire to defend this particular conclusion but I quote it as showing the outlook of the man. What the Church needs to-day is to abandon the letter in order thereby to recover the spirit of the great Theologians of the past.

quiet, homely appeal of the violet, the mossy nook, the village church. As I have already urged, our notions of the beauty of Heaven and the splendour of it have been modelled too much on the throne-room of Solomon in all his glory, and too little on the lilies of the field and on the everyday interests of Him whose standard of values we profess to recognise but have none of us yet completely apprehended. Stateliness, dignity, classical perfection are the ideal of Pagan art—Greek or Renaissance. The modern taste, which is not content with Praxiteles or Correggio unless it can also have Rembrandt or Rodin, is moving nearer to the aesthetic sense of Christ.

Humour

In the Bible there is not much humour, but the place where we find it most is the place where, if the line of argument I am pursuing is correct, we should most expect to find it—in some of the sayings of our Lord.[1] These instances of humour range from the delicate irony of the suggestion that the Pharisees were such as "needed no physician" to the touch of extravaganza in the picture of the man naïvely volunteering to remove a speck from a friend's eye while there is half a tree in his own. Only those sayings of our Lord have been preserved which happened to strike the original hearers as supremely interesting and which, in addition, appeared to the second generation of Christians, by whom our Gospels were composed, to have a distinct moral, religious, or apologetic value. Hence they have all been, as it were, passed through a sieve, which inevitably sifted out many things which seemed uninteresting or unimportant to more conventionally-minded followers. Thus only one saying of His implying a judgment on aesthetics ("the lilies of the field"), one only indicating His love for animals ("not one sparrow"), have been

[1] Cf. T. R. Glover, *The Jesus of History*, pp. 49 ff.

preserved. But these cannot have been the only ones of the kind that were spoken, for each implies a whole philosophy; and these two, be it noted, are recorded, not for the sake of showing His love of nature or of animals—the features in these sayings which are of most interest to us—but for the sake of the moral which can be drawn from them. There are, perhaps, not more than half a dozen sayings recorded which are clearly humorous. These are sufficient to prove that humour was natural to Him; and it is a reasonable conjecture that it was a more conspicuous feature in His discourse than at first sight we might infer from the relatively small proportion of recorded sayings in which we can still detect it.

Personally, I should not be satisfied by a future life from which the element of kindly humour was excluded. And the fact that it entered into the mental life of our Lord would seem to justify the inference that there will be something equivalent to it in the next world—otherwise, a real loss of values would take place. Humour is one of those things which is developed rather late in the progress of the race. Primitive humour like primitive courage usually has in it an element of cruelty and brutality, often, too, of grossness. But with the intellectual, and still more with the moral, advance of the community the humour which consists in jeers at the misfortunes of others or which expresses itself in crude practical jokes gives place to a subtler thing, of which the fundamental quality is a keen perception of absurdity or unreality and in which the predominant element is kindliness. In a society of real friends humour is the solvent in which egoism, the root of all unsocial thought and action, is insensibly dissolved. Most of all so when a person sees or even enunciates the joke against himself. The highest form of humour implies the unerring perception of reality which sees at once through shams, pretences, and self-deceptions. It implies a gift of expression which can

absolutely fit word, thought, and gesture in the subtlest combination. Again, it implies a keenness of moral perception which can "understand all" and yet refuse to "pardon all" without the expression of a subtle criticism which can purify without wounding, because it speaks not as from a moral pedestal, but from the standpoint of one conscious of membership in a race to which absurdity and self-deception is innate. It can express, indeed it alone can express in little things, a moral judgment without self-righteousness, because it implies the humility which necessarily goes with the recognition of reality. Humour, of course, can be cruel, base, or filthy, but in its highest form it implies a synthesis of the highest intellectual, aesthetic, and moral perceptions. In another aspect it is an expression, the most spontaneous perhaps of all, of the joy of life. It is essentially thanksgiving though not consciously realised as such. Again, it is before all things a social virtue since it is only within a circle bound together by real ties of fellowship and sympathy that it can attain its subtlest, richest, and most spontaneous expression. But if there are to be jokes in Heaven, they will be better and more kindly than most of those we hear on earth.

The Vision of God

"And I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun neither of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

Saints and theologians have always admitted, more than that, they have always cried aloud, that it was the unimagined and unimaginable to which they pointed when they spoke of the Beatific Vision. Yet, in spite of, perhaps even partly on account of, their emphasis on its unimaginable wonder, certain ideas and associa-

tions have gathered round the phrase which have led to an actual impoverishment of our notions of the life of Heaven, and have also exercised a misleading and demoralising influence on religious life and practice on earth. For this reason, and for this reason only, I feel that I cannot altogether avoid the subject.

Clearly here, as in what has gone before, the guiding principle of our enquiry must be that "the knowledge of God and of His Son Jesus Christ," which constitutes the essence of Eternal Life, is something of which already in this world it is possible to have some enjoyment. St. Paul, St. John, and the Saints in general agree in regarding the conscious experience of the presence of God in the life of the world to come rather as an enhancement, an intensification, an extension, and a consummation, of the highest experiences of this life than as something wholly different in kind. But just because it is the highest of all experiences that are here in question we must be especially careful to bring our judgment of what it is that we mean by "highest" to the test of the standard of values which was set by Christ. The conflict is always with us between the Christian and the Pagan conceptions as to what is the essential test and quality of "religious experience" or of the "spiritual"; and we do well to study carefully what St. Paul has to say to the Corinthians on the matter of "spiritual gifts." By the Corinthians "speaking with tongues"—an ecstasy of exalted emotion without clear content or articulate expression — was regarded as the type of the highest spiritual experience and activity. St. Paul does not condemn the emotion or even the incapacity of expression; but he clearly regards this incoherent emotionalism as a very great danger; and ranks it as far inferior to the passionate apprehension and clear enunciation of truth and righteousness which prophecy can give. And he proceeds at once to "show them a more excellent way"—the way of the love that never faileth

and is the only true and the final canon by which to judge of spiritual values in heaven as on earth.

In modern religion the error of the Corinthians most commonly takes two forms. First, there is what I may call the "cult of the supreme moment," the pursuit, for its own sake, of a religious experience of a wholly emotional character. Secondly, there is the notion that holiness or sanctity or "the supernatural life" is a thing which can exist apart from what is known as "ordinary" goodness, good sense or good taste. The teaching and the methods by which it is sought to attain this spurious religious experience or to realise this falsely conceived sanctity differ considerably according as those who pursue them are influenced by "the corrupt following" of Catholic Mysticism or of Evangelical Revivalism. The danger of the emotional short-cut which thinks to enjoy an experience of God without clear apprehension of and complete devotion to the Goodness, Beauty, and Truth which are the expression of, and the revelation in ordinary life of, the very nature of the Divine, is one of which the great Mystics and Revivalists themselves have often been fully aware. It is the tragedy of all greatness that it can be used to give an added prestige to weaknesses or errors, which may perhaps have existed in the great man, but in him were either merely the reflection of a general tendency of his time or were at any rate the least characteristic element of his own real message.

If we start with a false conception of what is meant by the worship of God on earth we shall reach a false conception of the life of Heaven. I have tried elsewhere[1] to work out what I believe to be the true conception of worship. In this place I can only state my conviction that a life consisting in one unending act of adoration—provided always that adoration be thought of as something isolated from, and unrelated to the life of social fellowship, creative work, aesthetic apprehension.

[1] *Concerning Prayer*, Essay VIII.

and active thought—is not the highest life. True worship is an orientation of the whole self which colours, conditions, and pervades these departmental activities. It is not a uniform preoccupation with the realisation of an emotional mystic experience which can supersede them; although in this world certainly, and possibly in the next, definite times may be set apart for concentration on the realisation of the Divine Presence apart from action, thought, aesthetic apprehension, or human fellowship.

That which is revealed to us by truth and beauty and goodness is not something other than the Divine, it is very God; but to say this and this only is to leave unsaid something quite as important. God is a person, and the Vision of God must mean a fuller realisation of this in all its richness and meaning than is possible on earth. The experience which goes with the perception of natural beauty sometimes seems to carry with it the consciousness of an Infinite Presence almost personal; in the next life the qualifying "almost" may disappear. But this analogy will not take us all the way we want to go, and it is hard not to surmise that to finite minds the Infinite Being must always baffle and transcend our apprehension. It is just here that the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation helps us. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son . . . he hath declared him." If this is true on earth surely it will not become untrue in Heaven. If we are right in thinking that the "spiritual body" of the world to come will be such as to completely express the real nature of our personalities, and if even in the body of His flesh and blood Christ could be for men the "image of the unseen God," how much more will He in His spiritual body be able to reveal to us the very nature of the Divine personality, "the fulness of the Godhead bodily"? In this way we can imagine how what now we see through a glass darkly we shall then indeed see *face to face*.

And what, may we expect, will be the effect upon

us of this visible personal contact with our Lord? Not, as is so often taken for granted, to dazzle, paralyse, or crush. A personality that is truly great, great that is in the sense in which Christ reckons greatness, is not one which breaks the bruised reed or quenches the smouldering wick in weaker characters. That is the function of the vulgar Super-man. A really great personality uplifts and inspires, it does not abash; it stimulates the individuality of others, it does not strive to reduce them to a pattern; it encourages them to diverse and spontaneous activity, it does not drill them into a uniform monotony.

> The world is so full of a number of things,
> I am sure we should all be as happy as kings.

Heaven will be more "full of things" than earth, and Christ is not the supreme Egoist who must always have all eyes directly gazing on Himself alone, but the supreme Friend who will share with us all our interests and our joys in their infinite variety.

"It is I; be not afraid."

In the picture by Apelles of Agamemnon offering up his only daughter in sacrifice to liberate the Greek fleet from the curse of an offended deity, we are told that on the faces of kings, chieftains, soldiers, and attendants was depicted with a master's skill every shade of sympathy, pity, horror, and awe; but the figure of the father was so turned that the expression of *his* face could not be seen. What word or brush cannot express imagination can sometimes compass. But there are things in regard to which even imagination must faint and fail. Our attempt to penetrate the nature of the life that is to be has reached this point.

The principle of the continuity between the life of Heaven and the highest life we know on earth—that necessary deduction from belief in the Divinity of Christ—will carry us a long way towards finding that definite

and concrete picture of the nature of the future life which was the goal set before us in this enquiry. It also indicates the direction in which further revelation may be sought. If Christ is for us the "portrait of the unseen God," our knowledge of God, and therefore of the nature of eternal life, will depend upon the extent to which we can enter into and understand the mind of Christ. But this is something which is always growing with the moral and spiritual growth, not only of the individual, but also of the community. In exact proportion to the effective realisation on earth of the Kingdom of God will be the increase in our knowledge of the real nature of the life of the world to come.

But something unrealised and unguessed at by man on earth must still remain. Say that in the life of Christ is revealed the life of very God, and you say it of the life of One who "increased in wisdom and stature," who was made "perfect through sufferings," but who only reached the climax of maturity in His experience of the triumph over death and His entry into a life which is beyond our present ken. The best we know on earth is no mere shadow, it is of the very substance of that which is to come, but it is still only an earnest and a foretaste. There must remain heights and possibilities yet unexplored. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." The fruit of the Vine which we drink on earth is really and essentially Eternal Life, but we shall drink it *new* in the Kingdom of God.

V

THE BIBLE AND HELL

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V

THE BIBLE AND HELL

Introduction

In any average gathering of persons discussing the future life from at all a modern point of view—always supposing they were prepared to say frankly what they thought, and not merely what they thought they ought to think—it would be fairly safe to assume that the idea of hell would be rejected almost without debate. By "hell" in this connection I would be understood to mean any state of punishment, whether bodily or spiritual, from which there is no longer any prospect of the soul deriving any benefit, and in which it suffers without hope for itself or profit to others.

Our strongest ground for the belief in immortality at all is our trust in the infinite Love of God and our conviction that in His Universe goodness must ultimately prevail; but the doctrine that through all eternity there will continue to exist individuals suffering acutely in useless and hopeless agony is too cruel and too irrational to be compatible with that belief. Indeed, there is no doubt that the notion that the doctrine of hell is an essential part of Christianity has been one of the main reasons of the widespread revolt against accepted religious ideas on the part of so large a proportion of the more thoughtful and seriously minded which has taken place during the last century.

The probable tendency of discussion in such a group

as I am supposing would be to some form of Universalism, *i.e.* to the belief that so long as there was any spark of goodness in the soul it might still be purified and developed by the Divine discipline through the ages. There might be differences of opinion as to the existence of any who could be regarded as irremediably bad, but it would be agreed that if there were such, some form of annihilation was the only end which could be conceived for them.

The difficulty, however, at once arises that though, no doubt, this is the general attitude of educated Christians to-day—and we shall consider later the ethical grounds on which it rests—it is not what the Church has in practice taught. And the traditional Christian teaching in this matter is very generally supposed to rest directly on the teaching of the Bible as a whole and of the New Testament in particular.

It is the contention of this paper that this supposition is wholly erroneous. The recovery, during recent years, of a large number of lost Jewish Apocalyptic writings has thrown an entirely new light on the exact nature of the problem contemplated, on the exact meaning of the terms employed, and on the history and origin of many of the ideas on this subject found in the Biblical writers. The net result of modern Biblical scholarship, with its application of the historical method commonly known as the higher criticism, combined with the light derived from these new sources, is to make it quite clear that the doctrine of hell in the sense in which that term was understood by our great-grandfathers is not to be found in the Bible at all. The Bible teaches, indeed, that the choice between right and wrong action is one which has eternal and abiding consequences. It is emphatically opposed to any belief that, do what we will, it will make no difference in the long run. What it does not teach is that, in the last and final result of things, there will still remain in the Universe beings suffering acute and everlasting

torment in permanent rebellion against the Divine Will and for ever rejecting the Divine Love.

Before, however, submitting the detailed evidence for this conclusion, it will be convenient to summarise briefly the main considerations upon which it rests.

(1) In the Old Testament, except for a single passage in one of the latest books, there is no clear teaching of any punishment at all for the wicked after death. They may be punished in this world, their bodies may lie unburied, their children may suffer for their sins, but they themselves will simply perish from the earth.

(2) The idea of a punishment after death for the wicked comes in with the so-called Apocalyptic literature, and the conception of the nature of that punishment was probably largely due to the influence of Zoroastrian teaching. Two points, however, of great importance emerge from the study of this literature: (*a*) The authors are mainly, if not entirely, preoccupied with the problem of the punishment deserved either by persecutors of the righteous Israel or by apostates from the Faith. They are hardly, if at all, interested in the future destiny of mankind at large, or even of ordinary sinners in Israel. (*b*) The punishment contemplated, though often conceived of in crude and material terms, is thought of as enduring for an epoch of limited duration, not for ever. A careful study of the passages in which they occur show that the words translated "eternal" or "everlasting" do not as a matter of fact mean what those words would imply in the English language. There is indeed a notable passage in which life during a period expressly defined as consisting of 500 years is spoken of as "eternal."

(3) The writers of the New Testament lived in an atmosphere which was saturated in the conceptions and the imagery of the Apocalyptic writings. Their relation to the whole cycle of Apocalyptic ideas is partly one of acceptance, partly one of emancipation, but the

degree of acceptance or emancipation varies very much in the different books of the New Testament. In particular there is reason to believe that the teaching of Our Lord, especially as represented in the first Gospel, has been to some extent modified by tradition so as to make it conform rather more closely to the conventional Apocalyptic views of the time. The general teaching of the New Testament appears to be that, on the one hand, the choice between good and evil in this world is one which involves abiding consequences extending far beyond the limits of this life, but, on the other hand, there is no clear evidence that any of the writers contemplated for the sinner an unending existence in a state of torment and rebellion against God.

In the light of these results it will then be possible to consider certain aspects of the problems of the destiny of the wicked in the next life, which do not seem to be explicitly contemplated by the Biblical writers, and to ask what light is thrown upon them, in the form in which they are presented to the mind of the present day, by the underlying moral and religious principles of the New Testament.

The Teaching of the Old Testament

It is now generally recognised that there are in the Old Testament but faint traces of any real belief in immortality. In the shadowy *Sheol*,[1] the land of forgetfulness and darkness, where men are gathered to their fathers, there are no moral distinctions between good and bad. When the problem of the sufferings of the righteous arises in an acute form, as in Job, Ecclesiastes, and some of the Psalms, it is of primary significance that no new or future world is called in to redress the balance of the old. The solution of the problem is not found in any system of rewards

[1] Though this is generally represented by "hell" in the A.V., we must beware of transferring to it the later connotation of the English word.

and punishments after death. In the few hints which are given of a life beyond the grave (*e.g.* Ps. xlix., lxxiii., and perhaps Job xix. 25) the point is the essential link of communion between the believer and his God, a link which even death cannot sever. That is to say, it is only the future of the righteous which is here under consideration. With regard to the wicked the solution is that they will ultimately perish from this earth, or that their children will suffer, not that they will be punished after death. In this Essay we are only concerned with what happens after death, and there can be no doubt that in the Old Testament the fate of the enemies of Jahweh is simply destruction, complete and final. This comes out very clearly in the descriptions of the "Day of the Lord" in connection with which we find, mainly in comparatively late passages, the idea of a Day of Judgment on the nations (first in Zeph. iii. 8 ; cf. Joel iii. 2 etc.). On this day Jahweh takes vengeance on His foes, but it is on His foes living on earth at the moment ; there is no suggestion that His vengeance falls on those already dead, or that it pursues its objects in any other way than by their complete destruction.

We may consider one or two late passages which might be regarded as exceptions. In the famous "Taunt Song" on the king of Babylon (Is. xiv.) the point is the contrast between his earthly pride and ambition and his humiliation as he descends to join the shades—the *Rephaim*—in the uttermost part of the pit. He has hoped to be as God, and he shares the common lot of men. Anything exceptional in his fate is apparently connected with the fact that his body remains unburied: "All the kings of the nations, all of them, sleep in glory every one in his own house. But thou art cast forth from thy sepulchre like an abominable branch. . . . Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial" (*vv.* 18 ff.). In order that Jahweh may punish such a prominent sinner He must bring it about that his body

remains unburied.[1] The inference is obvious that normally there were no rewards and punishments in Sheol.

Is. xxvi. 19 ff. does speak of the resurrection of righteous Israelites, but nothing is said of the wicked; *vv.* 20 ff., which might conceivably suggest this, belong apparently to another section.

Of greater importance for our purpose is the well-known passage which closes the Book of Isaiah (lxvi. 24): "They shall go forth and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh." The meaning seems to be that in the new age the righteous in Jerusalem will see the corpses of sinners, probably in the Valley of Hinnom, decaying and burning.[2] It is not said that their spirits live and feel the torture, though this may be intended. At any rate the passage is comparatively late, and it is beyond question important historically as affording a basis for the later doctrine of Gehenna.

The one clear exception which speaks of the punishment of sinners after death is Dan. xii. 2: "*Many* of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." The passage comes in the most Apocalyptic of all the Old Testament books (the date is 167 B.C.), and stands alone in suggesting a resurrection of sinners to judgment. We may note that the resurrection is apparently confined to the very good and the very bad, and, as seems probable from the context, to Israel. The sinners the writer has in mind are Jewish apostates, a feature which will meet us again later; they awake to shame and everlasting "abhorrence" (the word is the same as in Is. lxvi. 24); we do not yet get any mention of fire or torture.

[1] It is worth noting that great stress was laid on the importance of burial in Babylonian religion, as in Greece and Rome. See Jastrow, *Religious Belief in Babylonia and Assyria*, p. 359.

[2] Is. l. 11 is sometimes thought to embody the same idea.

The Teaching of the Apocrypha and Apocalyptic Literature

In the purely ethical and historical books of the Apocrypha no very marked change is to be noted. In Ecclesiasticus retribution is still confined to this life; sinners are punished only here, or in the blotting out of their remembrance after death and in the misfortunes of their descendants.[1] Even in Wisdom with its strong insistence on the blessed immortality of the righteous we hear but little of the fate of the wicked. They are conscious of the joys of the servants of God and of their own folly (v. 2 ff.), but apparently they themselves are destroyed rather than punished. The stress is on their lack of burial (iv. 18), the vanity of their life, and the perishing of their memory. On the other hand, in 2 Mac. we do find a definite belief in punishment after death (vi. 26, vii. 34 ff.); let us note that both these passages have to do with the encouragement of the martyr and the denouncing of the persecutor. In 4 Mac., where the main theme is the martyrdom of Eleazar and the seven brethren, the future doom of the tyrant is a constantly recurring feature. Each of the seven threatens Antiochus with the divine vengeance after death, and the same idea is repeated more than once with emphasis in the body of the book.

It is when we pass to the Apocalyptic literature[2]

[1] In vii. 17, where the Hebrew has "worms," the later Greek has "fire and worms," thus adding the idea of suffering to that of decay.

[2] This literature dates from the last two centuries B.C. and the first century A.D.; it includes 2 Esdras, found in our Apocrypha, the Books of Enoch, Baruch, the Testaments of the XII. Patriarchs, Jubilees, and shorter works. The "revelations" are always ascribed to some well-known figure of the distant past. Though there are in some books a few additions, or glosses, obviously due to Christian influence, these do not affect their general independence; as a whole they are either earlier than, or contemporary with, the New Testament. Much of this literature has either been discovered, or at least translated and edited, within recent years, and our knowledge and understanding of it is chiefly due to an English scholar, Dr. Charles. It may be studied in detail in his edition of the *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, published by the Oxford University Press, while a most readable and clear popular account is given in his volume in the Home University Library, *Between the Old and New Testaments*. A series of cheap translations is now being issued by the S.P.C.K.

proper that the real change of outlook comes. Since this is still comparatively unfamiliar except to students of theology, and is quite essential to the due understanding of the New Testament, it will be necessary to discuss it in some detail. The books consist of elaborate and detailed visions and prophecies, usually expressed in bizarre and fantastic imagery, of the "last things"—in technical language their eschatology. They are known as "Apocalypses," as claiming to contain "revelations" of the future.

In the eschatological pictures drawn of the future the punishment of sinners stands out very prominently, particularly in the Book of Enoch. But in regard to this, the essential thing to notice is that the classes punished are mainly the enemies of God and of Israel, the two being identified with no scruples of conscience as to the adequacy of the purely tribal conception of God implied. A terrible doom awaits the rebellious angels and demons, the powers of the earth who have been hostile to the chosen people ("the kings and the mighty" of Enoch), and oppressors and apostates from among the Jews themselves — the dissenters of the day. Most stress is laid on the divine vengeance in contexts which deal with persecution (as we have seen in 4 Mac.), or when party spirit and fanaticism run high. This is the case in those sections of Enoch which express the bitterness of the Pharisees against the later Maccabean princes and the Sadducees. Or a good example may be found in Jub. xxxvi. 19 ff. "On the day of turbulence and execration and indignation and anger, with flaming devouring fire as He burnt Sodom, so likewise shall He burn his land and his city and all that is his, and he shall be blotted out of the book of the discipline of the children of men and not be recorded in the book of life, but in that which is appointed to destruction, and he shall depart into eternal execration; so that their condemnation may be always renewed in hate and in execration,

and in wrath, and in torment, and in indignation, and in plagues, and in disease for ever." The words are put into the mouth of Isaac with reference to Esau, but the real reference is obviously to contemporary Edom. Those who have described hell, whether in word or in picture, have usually found room in it for those they disliked, and it is worth noting how strongly this feature stands out in its earliest descriptions. We may ascribe to the same spirit the insistence on the delight of the righteous in the tortures of their enemies which meets us not infrequently in this literature (Enoch xxvii. 3, lxii. 12, etc.; Ass. Mos. x. 10). It is a somewhat rare touch to find punishment after death considered in relation to matters of purely personal ethics as in 3 Baruch iv. 16, where it is drunkards who are warned that they are "surrendering themselves to the eternal fire."

Again we hear comparatively little of the fate of the mass of mankind or of those Gentiles who have not come into direct collision with the chosen people. In Enoch xci. 9, 2 Baruch xliv. 15, they are all destroyed, but there is no gloating over their doom, as is the case when the enemies of Israel are thought of. Sometimes (The Testaments of the XII. Patriarchs generally, Enoch l., xc. 30, 4 Esdras vi. 26) the Gentiles are converted, but of course the reference is only to those who are alive at the coming of the Kingdom, not to the dead, of whom we hear nothing.

A specially instructive passage is 2 Baruch lxxii. (from an earlier source than ch. xliv. just quoted). Here the Messiah summons the nations; "Some of them He shall spare and some of them He shall slay . . . Every nation, which knows not Israel, and has not trodden down the seed of Jacob, shall indeed be spared. And this because some out of every nation shall be subjected to thy people. But all those who have ruled over you, or have known you, shall be given to the sword." We see here very clearly how the view of

the future is dominated by the nationalist outlook, and by the desire for vengeance on all who have ill-treated Israel.

As to the nature of the punishment of sinners the figures used are those familiar to us from the New Testament and later Christian writers, but there is far more stress on the details than in the New Testament itself. Fire and worms, ice and cold, chains and darkness, are the constant instruments of torture. For the purpose, however, of this paper the view entertained as to the duration and results of the punishment deserves a more special study. In this connection "eternal," "for ever," and such like phrases are used freely, but it is clear that they are used very loosely and that the question of actual "everlastingness" is not thought out. Sometimes "for ever"—and the point is of primary importance for our interpretation of the New Testament—means only "till the Judgment." In Jub. v. 10, fallen angels are "bound in the depths of the earth for ever, till the day of the great condemnation when judgment is executed." In Enoch v. 5 we find the words "The years of your destruction shall be multiplied in eternal execration, and ye shall find no mercy," but the following verses, which deal with the blessedness of the righteous, seem to contemplate a temporary state of bliss ("They shall complete the number of the days of their life"). It is therefore not probable that the tortures of the lost were regarded as strictly everlasting. In Enoch x. 5 "for ever" with reference to punishment stands for seventy "generations," while in *v.* 10 "eternal life" denotes 500 years. Or again in 2 Baruch xl. 3 we read that the principate of the Messiah "will stand for ever, until the world of corruption is at an end"; cf. lxxiii. 1. Similarly 4 Mac., which apparently emphasises the eternity of punishment so strongly, can yet speak of the life of the blessed as πολυχρόνιος ("very long," xvii. 12). It is clear then that "for ever," "eternal," and the

like sometimes, if not always, mean either "for the duration of an *aeon*," or "until the final judgment."

What, then, is supposed to happen to the sinner after this? There are not a few passages which suggest annihilation. In Enoch xix. 1 angels are judged "until they are made an end of." xlviii. 9, speaking of the kings and the mighty, reads "On the day of their anguish and affliction they shall not be able to save themselves. And I will give them over into the hands of mine elect: as straw in the fire shall they burn before the face of the holy: as lead in the water shall they sink before the face of the righteous, and no trace of them shall any more be found." Such language undoubtedly suggests complete destruction; cf. also ch. liii. Similarly 4 Esdras xii. 33, xiii. 10 ff. 38, seem to imply that the enemies of the Messiah shall simply be destroyed, and the language of the Psalms of Solomon, which is mainly modelled on that of the Old Testament, is to the same effect.

Other passages do at first sight suggest an indefinite period of punishment after death; *e.g.* Enoch xci. 9, "they shall be cast into the Judgment of fire, and perish in wrath and grievous judgment for ever"; 4 Mac. ix. 9, "thou for our cruel murder shalt suffer at the hands of divine justice sufficient torment by fire for ever"; x. 11, "thou for thy impiety and thy cruelty shalt endure torments without end." The fiercely fanatical and nationalist Book of Judith goes out of its way to explain that the fire does not destroy. The Almighty puts "fire and worms in the flesh of oppressors, and they shall weep and feel their pain for ever" (xvi. 17; cf. Enoch cviii. 3). Such passages clearly exclude immediate annihilation after death, but in view of the examples given above of the loose use of "for ever," it is dangerous to interpret them as necessarily implying everlasting punishment. In the Secrets of Enoch part of the third heaven is a hell prepared for "an eternal inheritance" for sinners, and

mansions are assigned to good and to bad, but in the climax of ch. lxv., after the "seven weeks" there is one "aeon" when time ceases and the righteous live eternally, while the fate of the wicked is passed over in silence.

With regard to the result of such punishment after death, it is not infrequently depicted as bringing opening of eyes and repentance. In Enoch lxiii. 1 the kings and the mighty implore respite from their torments in order that they may fall down and worship before the Lord of Spirits and confess their sins before him. In lxvii. 9, "in proportion as the burning of their bodies becomes severe, a corresponding change shall take place in their spirit for ever and ever; for before the Lord of Spirits none shall utter an idle word." So in 4 Esdras ix. 12 those who have defied the Law during the time of repentance "must be brought to know after death by torment." But though we might seem here on the verge of a more ethical view in which punishment could be regarded as remedial, the possibility of any efficacious repentance after death is explicitly denied both in 2 Baruch and 4 Esdras.

In a case such as this, however, even denial may mark a step forward, since it at any rate shows that the difficulty is coming to be realised. And in fact the two books just mentioned do stand on a higher ethical level in this respect than the rest of the Apocalyptic literature, and even, it must be confessed, than the New Testament itself.[1] For they realise the tremendous moral problem involved if anything like eternal punishment or extinction is to be regarded as the future fate of a large proportion of mankind. There is a curiously modern note in passages such as the following from 4 Esdras:—

> O thou earth, why hast thou brought forth, if the mind is sprung from the dust as every other created thing! It had been better if the dust itself had even been unborn, that the mind might not have come into being from it. But as it is, the mind grows with us, and on this account we are tormented,

[1] See below, p. 214, n. 2.

because we perish and know it. Let the human race lament, but the beasts of the field be glad! Let all the earth-born mourn, but let the cattle and flocks rejoice! For it is far better with them than with us; for they have no judgment to look for, neither do they know of any torture or of any salvation promised to them after death. But what doth it profit us that we shall be preserved alive, but yet suffer great torment? For all the earth-born are defiled with iniquities, full of sins, laden with offences. And if after death we were not to come into judgment, it might, perchance, have been far better for us (vii. 62 ff.).

This is my first and last word; better had it been that the earth had not produced Adam, or else, having once produced him, for thee to have restrained him from sinning. For what doth it profit us all that in the present we must live in grief, and after death look for punishment? (vii. 116 ff.; see also x. 9 f.).

What, indeed, is the purpose of the infinite skill and labour lavished upon man? We are all one fashioning, the work of thine hands, as thou hast said. . . . And afterwards thou sustainest it in thy mercy, and nourishest it in thy righteousness; thou disciplinest it through thy law, and reprovest it in thy wisdom. Thou wilt kill it—as it is thy creature, and quicken it—as it is thy work! If then, with a light word thou shalt destroy him who with such infinite labour has been fashioned by thy command, to what purpose was he made? (viii. 7 ff.).

The writer of the book can himself find no solution to the problem. The angel bids him "rejoice over the few that shall be saved and not grieve over the multitude that perish"; "many have been created, but few shall be saved." He falls back, as does St. Paul in a similar connection, on the inscrutability of the ways of Providence, coupled with an almost desperate faith in the love of God, "Lovest thou him [Israel] better than him that made him?" "Thou comest far short of being able to love my creation more than I." The consistent application of this principle must occupy us later; we can only in passing pay our respect to the nameless questioner who realised so clearly the fundamental elements of the problem.[1]

[1] For a fuller discussion of the teaching of 4 Esdras on this and related questions, see the writer's article on "The Fourth Book of Esdras and St. Paul" (*Expository Times*, xxvii. p. 551).

To sum up the results of our survey: the Apocalyptic literature, unlike the Old Testament, lays considerable stress on punishments after death, and this stress is very definitely connected with feelings of bitterness towards persecutors, oppressors, or heretics. Various views are held as to the duration of such punishment, but it is clear that "for ever," "eternal," and the like, rarely, if ever, connote everlastingness. There is no trace of any idea of an efficacious repentance after death, though the sporadic hints of the effects of punishment in opening the eyes of the sufferer contain the germs of a higher point of view. The ethical problem of the fate of the mass of mankind is raised, but no solution is found.

Zoroastrian Influence on Jewish Eschatology

This doctrine of future punishment was, as we have seen, a new feature in Jewish thought. It is natural to ask whether it can be traced to any external non-Jewish influences. A full consideration of the subject would involve a discussion of the sources of the post-exilic eschatology as a whole, and the influence of Babylonian, Egyptian, Persian, and Greek ideas upon its development. If, however, we confine ourselves to a few remarks bearing on the vital point of the conception of punishment after death in contemporary religions, Babylonian religion at once drops out, since it had no real doctrine of rewards and punishments in the other world. "The absence of the ethical factor in the conception of life after death, preventing . . . the rise of a doctrine of retribution for the wicked, and belief in a better fate for those who had lived a virtuous and godly life, had at least a compensation in not leading to any dogma of actual bodily sufferings for the dead. . . . A hell full of tortures is the counterpart of a heaven full of joys. The Babylonian-Assyrian religion had neither the one nor the other."[1] Egyptian

[1] Jastrow, *Religious Belief in Babylonia and Assyria*, p. 373.

religion, on the other hand, in its faith of Osiris, had developed its view of the weighing of the soul and of judgment after death; the condemned, however, were destroyed, not punished indefinitely.[1] The Greeks had their well-known myths of tortures in Hades, and theories of future punishment were carried further in the Orphic Mysteries. But outside Orphism punishments were only thought of in the case of notorious and very special sinners, like Sisyphus and Tantalus, and as in the "Myth of Er" at the close of Plato's *Republic*. The Olympian religion was too easygoing to believe in eternal punishment; and it is thought by some scholars that so far as it existed at all the belief was due to Orphism, where it was essentially the fate of the uninitiated.[2] In the same way Dr. Farnell writes:[3] "To suppose that the crowds that sought the privilege of initiation were tormented, as modern Europe has been at certain times, by ghostly terrors of judgment, is to misconceive the average Greek mind. The inferno of Greek mythology is far less lurid than Dante's, and it is to the credit of the Greek temperament that it never took its goblin world very seriously, though the belief was generally prevalent that the gods might punish flagrant sinners after death."

The main influence behind the Jewish eschatology, in this as in other doctrines, must undoubtedly be sought in Zoroastrianism. Here we find the definite separation of good and bad after death, with rewards and punishments, mainly by fire. On the question how far the punishment was conceived of as eternal there is some doubt as to the original teaching of Zoroaster himself.[4]

[1] *Enc. Rel. and Ethics*, *s.v.* "Egyptian Religion," v. p. 243.

[2] Cf. Miss Harrison, *Prolegomena to Greek Religion*, pp. 612 ff.

[3] *Cults of the Greek States*, iii. p. 193.

[4] Moulton (*Early Zoroastrianism*, p. 312) holds, in contrast to his previously expressed view, that the *Gathas* imply "penal suffering without end." He admits, however, that the molten metal which accomplishes the separation suggests annihilation of the sinner or of the sin, and he adds a note by Prof. Jackson to the effect that there is in Zoroastrianism exactly the same problem as in Judaism with regard to the real meaning of the term "everlasting." The Pahlavi interpretation renders the original phrase by "till the future body" or "until the resurrection." See also pp. 157, 173, which leave the doctrine equally ambiguous.

There is, however, no doubt that in later developments of Zoroastrianism, which go back to a period before the date of the Jewish Apocalyptic literature, and therefore represent the form of Zoroastrianism with which post-exilic Judaism came in contact, the belief was definitely held that the punishment of the sinner only lasted till the commencement of the final age when Ahriman and his hosts are annihilated and hell itself becomes pure.[1]

This brief comparison of contemporary thought, therefore, confirms the position already reached that the question of strict "everlastingness" was not thought out with regard to the punishment of the sinner. The ethical instinct required that he should suffer after death, if he had prospered here, and it depicted his sufferings in a terrifying form, but it did not condemn him to an eternal hell.

The Teaching of the New Testament[2]

We find in the New Testament a sharp division into two classes, those who will enter the kingdom and those who will not, those who inherit life and those whose end is death, the sheep and the goats. We are, however, told far less than is usually supposed about the final fate of the latter, and details as to future punishment are largely confined to books of a single type. In view of this fact it will be simplest to make no attempt at chronological order in our treatment of its literature, but to clear the ground by beginning with the groups in which the subject is least prominent.

In the Johannine literature, outside the Apocalypse,

[1] *Enc. Rel. and Ethics*, *s.v.* "Eschatology," v. p. 376.

[2] The reader who may be disinclined for detailed discussions of passages may omit what follows and pass straight on to the summary on p. 198. No doubt it would be convenient if such discussions could be short and simple, but the New Testament was not written as a "Handbook to Theology." It consists of books written for different purposes, by different writers, and at different dates, and expressed in the language and ideas current at the time. It is therefore wise, on many points at least, to look with some suspicion on what claim to be brief dogmatic statements of the teaching of the New Testament, unless they are based on a thorough examination and comparison of the relevant passages in the light of contemporary modes of thought.

the main thought is the contrast between death and life, with the self-acting judgment of the hearer's own attitude towards the truth.[1] There is no kind of emphasis on the future punishment of the sinner, or on what his "death" implies. The eschatological denunciations of the Baptist are omitted in common with practically all the other eschatological features of the Synoptists. The passage at the end of ch. v., which includes the awakening to a resurrection of judgment, stands alone, and may perhaps best be accounted for as a more or less inconsistent retention of the popular point of view. Otherwise the writer contents himself with saying that the wrath of God abides on the unbeliever (iii. 36), or that the unfruitful branch is cast into the fire and burned (xv. 6), a phrase which suggests annihilation.[2]

In the teaching of St. Paul we find a similar antithesis between death and life, the flesh and the spirit. Sinners cannot inherit the Kingdom of God (Gal. v. 21, 1 Cor. vi. 9, Eph. v. 5); there are fairly constant references to judgment and to the wrath of God, especially in Romans. But it is very doubtful whether St. Paul speaks of the resurrection of the wicked except in so far as it is implied in the gathering of all before the judgment seat (Rom. ii. 14 ff., 2 Cor. v. 10). This is indeed emphasised in the speeches of Acts (cf. xvii. 31, xxiv. 25; cf. St. Peter in x. 42), but it is often held that on this point St. Luke somewhat misinterpreted his master's teaching. In the Epistles the resurrection is generally something to be won or attained to (Phil. iii. 11), the privilege of those who have received the adoption of sons and the first-fruits of the spirit (cf. Luke xx. 35). Except in 1 and 2 Thess., which we shall consider later, there is no sort of doctrine of what happens to the sinner after judgment, certainly no emphasis is laid on any punishment, eternal or other-

[1] Cf. Essay III. p. 125.
[2] For "the sin unto death" (1 John v. 16) see below, p. 195.

wise. This feature is somewhat remarkable, as St. Paul was not always specially tender to those who differed from him, and it is noticeable that in the Pastoral Epistles, with all the fierceness of their denunciations of false teachers, there is no reference to their future doom, except, perhaps, in 2 Tim. iv. 14.[1]

In Hebrews we find considerable stress on the finality of choice and the impossibility of repentance for backsliders. Punishment is spoken of in terms of fire which devours (x. 27) and consumes (xii. 29); the language not only suggests but implies annihilation.

Acts has nothing bearing on our subject, except the references to judgment already quoted. Here again this mildness of tone in a book which deals largely with persecution and opposition is in strong contrast to the language of the Apocalyptic books. A similar reticence is found in 1 Peter, which, again, is written in an atmosphere of persecution. The furthest the writer goes is to speak of the approaching judgment; in it "if the righteous is scarcely saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?" (iv. 18). James again only speaks generally of the coming of the judge who is able both to save and to destroy (iv. 12). It is worth comparing the passage in ch. v. on the tyranny of the rich, with its reserve as to their future fate, with Enoch chs. xciv. ff., where very similar language is used combined with a fierce exultation in their approaching torments and destruction.[2]

We pass to the teaching of the Synoptists. Here the immediate goal is the coming of the Kingdom, whether on earth or in Heaven; but it must not be assumed that the conception is in all respects identical with our modern view of the "Heaven" awaiting the good after death or judgment. There is a sharp dichotomy between those who will enter the Kingdom and

[1] "The Lord shall reward him (Alexander)"; the words are a quotation from Ps. lxii. 12, Prov. xxiv. 12, and seem to mean simply, "I leave him to God."

[2] The passage in James is perhaps based on Enoch; "day of slaughter" occurs in both, but this phrase may have been taken independently from Jer. xii. 3.

those who are to be cast out. Here the teaching of Jesus and the early Church was in entire agreement with contemporary Jewish thought, the only difference being as to the principles on which the composition of the two classes was to be determined. Few in fact find the narrow way; "many" will find themselves shut out (Mt. vii. 13, Lk. xiii. 23 ff.). Some kind of penalty is undoubtedly contemplated for those who refuse the Gospel. What is its nature? How far do Our Lord and the Gospels teach a doctrine of "hell"?

Attention may first be called to a fact which has been very insufficiently realised; there is a marked and striking difference in this respect between the teaching of Our Lord as reported by St. Luke and His teaching as reported by St. Matthew. It will be necessary to give evidence of this statement in some detail.

"Fire" as applied to future punishment is found in Luke only in the teaching of the Baptist (Lk. iii. 9, 17), in Mark only in the "offences" passage (Mk. ix. 43 ff.). By Matthew it is used 10 times, in 6 different contexts.

"Gehenna" occurs in Lk. only in xii. 5, in Mk. only in the "offences" passage, in Mt. 7 times (5 different contexts).[1]

"Eternal" (*αἰώνιος*) is never used by Lk. of future punishment, by Mk. only of "the eternal sin," by Mt. 3 times, as well as being implied in the substantival phrase, "either in this aeon or in that which is to come," once (xii. 32).

"Day of judgment" is never used by Lk.; Mt. 4 times. Lk. has "in the judgment" 3 times; Mt. this, or similar phrases, 5 times; Mk. has neither. Mk. and Lk., but not Mt., according to the best texts, have the phrase, "these shall receive greater condemnation" (*περισσότερον κρῖμα*, Mk. xii. 40).

[1] Elsewhere in the New Testament only in James iii. 6 (the tongue set on fire of hell). In Lk. xvi. 23 ff. (the Lazarus parable) we have "Hades," "torments," and "flame."

"Outer darkness" occurs in Mt. 3 times (viii. 12, xxii. 13, xxv. 30), and nowhere else. Since in each case Lk. has close parallels to the Matthean narratives, his omission of the reference to future punishment is significant. Similarly the phrase, "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" occurs in Lk. only in xiii. 28, while Mt. has it 6 times. In Mt. xxii. 13, xxiv. 51, xxv. 30, the fact that the more or less parallel Lucan context does not contain the words is again significant. Again Lk. in xxii. 22 omits the words, applied to Judas both in Mt. and Mk., "it were good for that man if he had not been born."

Positively there are indications of a milder view of the future life in the Lazarus parable (the context where future punishment is most prominent in Lk.), with its hint of the rich man's better feelings in his torment, in the repentance of the thief at the last moment, and in the saying about many and few stripes (Lk. xii. 47), implying degrees of punishment. All these are peculiar to the third Gospel, while Lk. alone, after the saying, "one shall be taken, the other left," adds the question, "Where, Lord?" with the ambiguous answer, "Where the body is, thither will the eagles also be gathered together" (xvii. 37). This *logion* is clearly intended to exclude any undue dogmatising as to the future.[1]

We have, therefore, sufficient evidence that Luke's attitude as to the future punishment of the sinner excluded from the Kingdom is much milder than Matthew's. The question at once arises, Which is nearer to Our Lord's own teaching?[2] Has Luke toned it

[1] The saying "Thou shalt not come out thence till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing" occurs both in Mt. v. 25 and Lk. xii. 59. It seems to be a general statement of the principle that when the time for reconciliation is allowed to slip by the law must take its course. It is not clear that it refers in any way to God's dealings with man. If, however, it is to be understood as the sudden introduction of a pronouncement as to the nature of future punishment, it is ambiguous. It may at least imply that the debt can ultimately be paid.

[2] It must be remembered that even when we have decided which is the earliest form of the varying traditions presented to us in our present Gospels, it cannot be assumed that we have always got back to the *ipsissima verba* of Christ. See below, p. 200.

down or Matthew added to it? It is *a priori* possible that both processes have been at work to some extent. On the one hand Luke's reticence might be an instance of his "Paulinism"; we have already noted a similar reserve in the Pauline Epistles. On the other, the language of Matthew is in line with the general Judaic and Apocalyptic tone of the first Gospel, and its accuracy will depend on whether these features as a whole can be regarded as representing the original teaching of Christ (see Essay III. pp. 123 ff.).

At this point we may ask, What light is thrown on the question by Mark, our earliest Gospel? The relevant passages are: iii. 28-29 (sin against the Holy Ghost); viii. 35 (the possibility of losing one's "life," ψυχή); ix. 43 ff. (the command to cut off what offends); the sayings that the Pharisees shall receive greater condemnation (xii. 40), and that it were better for Judas if he had not been born (xiv. 21).[1] The latter saying occurs in Enoch xxxviii. 2 (plural instead of singular), and though Our Lord may have quoted a current saying (whether directly from Enoch or not), the fact of its being a quotation, together with its omission by Luke, makes it very possible that it may be an early addition to an original "woe to that man by whom he is betrayed." The Marcan language as a whole is at any rate vague and lays little emphasis on future punishment; it supports the originality of Luke in this respect as against Matthew. Again, in view of the fact that Matthew shows definite traces of later controversies between Jews and Christians, it does become very probable that these have left their mark in a heightening of the severity of Our Lord's language against the Pharisees and other unbelievers and apostates.[2] We have already seen, and shall see again,

[1] In the non-Marcan appendix (xvi. 16) we have the general statement, "he that disbelieveth shall be condemned."

[2] It may be remarked that from the point of view of the strict inerrancy of the Bible, the theory that Luke has toned down or omitted the severe sayings is no easier than the theory that Matthew has added to them. Those who hold the

that the belief in hell has always owed much to such types of religious bitterness.

There remains to discuss the books in which the doctrine of future punishment is prominent. They are Matthew, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 2 Peter, Jude, and Revelation. The curious significance of this grouping of books is at once apparent, in that they are the very books which are recognised as showing most clearly the influence of contemporary Apocalyptic ideas.

In 1 Thess. v. 3 we hear of sudden destruction and wrath (v. 9) falling on the unwary: the nature and result of the vengeance remains undefined. The language of 2 Thess. goes further; here God "recompenses affliction to them that afflict you," and brings "vengeance," "punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord" (i. 6 ff.). We note the following points. The passage suggests annihilation rather than indefinite torment; it is strongly Apocalyptic in character; and once again the main motive is indignation towards persecutors. Finally this language occurs in an early Epistle (assuming the authenticity of 2 Thess., which, however, is not undisputed), and does not, as we have already seen, represent St. Paul's later teaching.

2 Peter and Jude are, of course, definitely in line with the older Apocalyptic books; the stress is on the punishment of fallen angels, false teachers, and rebels against authority; the language used is conventional and somewhat vague, suggesting death and destruction.

The Apocalypse has much to say of the final doom of the sinner. The prominent features are such things as the second death, the lake of fire, the abyss, and the

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doctrine of hell argue rightly that, if it is *ex hypothesi* true, it is the real charity to "declare the whole counsel of God" (see *e.g.* Liddon's Sermon on this subject in *Clerical Life and Work*), and that it is treason to gloss over it. Luke's consistent omission of this type of teaching is, therefore, very hard to explain on any theory that the Gospels were mechanically inspired in their record of Christ's teaching. From the modern point of view there is no special difficulty either in Matthew's over-emphasis or in Luke's toning down, and we are free to choose between the two on the principles of historical criticism.

familiar elements of earlier Apocalypses. It should, however, be noted that many of the "woes" refer to the temporary tribulations which usher in the establishment of the Kingdom. Once more attention may be called to the fact that the underlying motive of the book is denunciation of the persecuting power of Rome and the conviction of its final doom.

We go on to ask how far even these books teach the everlasting nature of the punishment of which they speak. They use freely the figure of fire, sometimes with the epithet "unquenchable." Fire suggests suffering with one of two results, either the purging away of dross and impurities (it is so used in 1 Cor. iii. 13, 15, in an eschatological context, 1 Peter i. 7, Rev. iii. 18) or the destruction of the whole of what is committed to it. This latter is certainly the *prima facie* impression conveyed when we read of chaff (Matt. iii. 12) or tares (xiii. 40) cast into the fire (cf. John xv. 6 and Heb. x. 27, etc.). It would, in fact, be difficult to find any figure which suggests more completely speedy and final annihilation. "Unquenchable" in this connection means simply that the fire will not be extinguished until it has done its work; the same applies to the undying worm of Mk. ix. 48, etc. So generally, unless we hear explicitly to the contrary, we have no right to assume that the victims of the fire suffer eternally without being consumed; that they do live on is never stated in the New Testament. The same principles apply to language about death, the second death, destruction, and the like. They all suggest ceasing to be.

There remains the word "aeonian" (*αἰώνιος*) together with cognate phrases using the noun *aeon*. As we have seen, in the Synoptics these are applied to future punishment only in Mt. xviii. 8., xxv. 41, 46, xii. 32, with the exception of Mk. iii. 29. Elsewhere, outside the Apocalypse, they occur only in 2 Thess. i. 9, Jude 7, 13. John viii. 52, x. 28, xi. 26 promises

that the believer shall not die "for ever" (*εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα*) and so implies that others may do so. It is recognised that the translation "everlasting," found in A.V., is wrong; R.V. has "eternal."[1] The word properly means "age-long," lasting for an aeon, whatever that may be. It is used freely in the Septuagint of things which are in no sense everlasting, and takes its meaning from the context. The Jews of the day believed in a variety of aeons or ages, including sometimes a temporary Messianic age. No doubt in the New Testament "aeonian" is used vaguely; the point is that we have no right to read into it any metaphysical idea of unending duration. As we have seen with regard to the Apocalyptic books, from which this language is derived, there are various views as to the duration of punishment, and "for ever" sometimes means only till the final judgment or the like. We have, in fact, a clear example of this use in the New Testament; Jude 6 speaks of angels "kept in *everlasting* bonds under darkness *unto the judgment of the great day*." The word used here is not "aeonian," but another Greek word (*ἀΐδιος*), which actually emphasises unendingness more strongly. If this can be used in this way much more can "aeonian." If we look at the context of the New Testament passages we see that in Mt. xviii. 8 it is applied to fire, in 2 Thess. i. 9 to destruction; both of these are compatible with annihilation, while when we read in Jude 7 of Sodom and Gomorrah "suffering the punishment of eternal fire," it is not an obvious interpretation that their inhabitants have been miraculously kept alive to feel it. There are, however, passages in Revelation where unending duration is suggested by the phrase "to ages of ages (*εἰς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων*) Let it be noted that this in itself implies that anything belonging to a single "aeon" was not necessarily unending.

[1] The difference between the two may not be obvious at first sight. The point is that "eternal" need not suggest endless duration; it may apply to that which belongs to another order of being and is out of time, cf. Essay III. pp. 97 ff.

The phrase is used in xix. 3 of the burning of Babylon—not necessarily a personal reference at all—in xx. 10 of the torments of the devil, the beast and the false prophet, and in xiv. 11 of the worshippers of the beast. The last passage is the most important; it is, however, a direct reminiscence of Isaiah xxxiv. 10, which refers to the desolation of the Land of Edom. In Isaiah there is certainly no idea of the unending torment of men; it is simply a picture of complete doom on a country, and it is precarious to read too much into the quotation of such a phrase in a very rhetorical context such as Rev. xiv. In xix. 20 it is only the beast and the false prophet who are cast alive into the lake of fire; their followers are killed and their flesh given to the birds. The contradiction with xiv. 11 shows how far we are from any idea of a formal doctrine of the unending punishment of sinners. Indeed when we find cut-and-dried theological dogmas based on the obviously figurative and conventional language of the Apocalypse, we can only wonder at the artificiality of the older Biblical exegesis.

There remain three important passages in the Gospels, in which it is argued that the context itself clearly implies everlasting punishment.

(*a*) Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost (Mk. iii. 28, Mt. xii. 31, Lk. xii. 10). This saying of Our Lord's is one of those which occur in a slightly different version in Mark and also in Q—the hypothetical document assumed to have been incorporated, in some form or another, in the first and third Gospels. Wherever Mark and Q contain similar matter it will usually be found that Matthew combines the two versions, while Luke either gives both, but in different contexts, or prefers to follow Q. Scholars are divided on the question whether in these cases Mark's version was derived from Q, or whether he represents an independent tradition, but it is usually agreed that the Q version is the older and as a rule more original.

Hence we are justified in assuming with regard to the saying before us that the form of words in Lk. xii. 10 is likely to be the nearest to the original.[1]

We are mainly concerned here with the concluding clause:

Mk. "Hath never forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin."

Lk. "It shall not be forgiven him."

Mt. "It shall not be forgiven him, either in this world or in that which is to come."

Granted that the Lucan form is the most original, the word "eternal" was not used at all by Our Lord in this context.

As usual, Matthew is most explicit and seems to combine Mark and Q.

As to the meaning, we may emphasise the implication that all other sins are forgivable, conceivably hereafter, if not here. Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost alone is not. It is not said that the soul guilty of this sin will suffer everlastingly; the words are consistent with annihilation. This is entirely in keeping with the modern point of view. If, as is probable, blasphemy against the Holy Ghost means an obstinate refusal to recognise the good, this refusal, if persisted in, must at last destroy the power of doing so. Such a state would be hopeless; the soul could only cease to be.[2]

(*b*) The cutting off of what offends (Mk. ix. 43 ff., Mt. v. 29, xviii. 8 f.). This passage is not found in Luke. Its importance for our present purpose lies in the epithets "eternal" and "unquenchable" applied to the fire, and in the description of Gehenna as the place "where their worm dieth not and their fire is

[1] On the whole question of the relation of Mk. and Q, see Streeter in *Studies in the Synoptic Problems*, pp. 166 ff. W. C. Allen in the same volume (p. 253), and Harnack in the *Sayings of Jesus*, accept the Lucan form of the saying considered above as the original. It is worth emphasising the fact that this conclusion is arrived at purely on grounds of literary criticism, and not from any desire to eliminate a possible reference to future punishment.

[2] The sin unto death of 1 John v. 16 may be understood in the same way.

not quenched."[1] It has already been argued that such language does not necessarily imply that the fire and worm do not destroy that on which they feed; the present tenses "state simply the law or normal condition of the worm and fire. . . . The question of the eternity of punishment does not come into sight."[2] The description of Gehenna is an almost exact quotation from Is. lxvi. 25,[3] and may well be an early or editorial addition to an original saying of Christ. But whether the words were actually spoken by Him or not, it is most precarious to build a doctrine of eternal punishment on an ambiguous quotation.

It may be added that the passage is a very difficult one. Assuming, as is no doubt the case, that the maiming is to be understood metaphorically, it would seem to be implied that the self as a result of its necessary discipline will enter into life in some sense maimed and with its natural powers impaired. This can hardly be regarded as the final state of the saved soul, and if this be granted it is at least possible that the entry into Gehenna is not the last word for the lost either.

(*c*) The sheep and the goats (Mt. xxv. 31 ff.). A glance at Patristic quotations and general literature dealing with eternal punishment will show that of all Gospel passages this is the one most confidently relied on. The crucial words are "Depart from me ye cursed into the 'aeonian' fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels" (*v.* 41) and "These shall go into 'aeonian' punishment, but the righteous into 'aeonian' life" (*v.* 46). It is argued (1) that the mention of the devil and his angels shows that the fire is neither purgatorial nor temporary, unless we are to hold that the devil will be either saved or destroyed. (2) That since 'aeonian' is used of the life of the blessed

[1] According to the best reading the phrase occurs in Mk. only in *v.* 48, not, as in A.V., in *vv.* 44, 46.

[2] Swete, *The Gospel according to St. Mark, ad loc.*

[3] See above, p. 175.

as well as of the doom of the lost, if the one comes to an end the other must also. This is Augustine's famous argument against Origen. As to (1), those who hold that the only end conceivable for the irremediably bad is that they will cease to be, will no doubt hold the same of the devil, if they think of him in terms of personality. (2) Assuming that 'aeonian' is indeterminate in meaning, it is perfectly true that we could not argue from the particular epithet here applied to the life of the blessed that that life was everlasting. But in fact our belief in this depends on quite other grounds than the *nuance* of an adjective, and we are not in the least driven to hold that communion with God will come to an end because we believe that punishment will do so.

Apart, however, from the question of the duration of punishment this is undoubtedly one of the strongest passages about future punishment itself. It is therefore well to note (1) that it is peculiar to Matthew; we have already seen how strongly he emphasises this feature of eschatology. (2) The whole passage is charged with reminiscences of the Apocalyptic books.[1]

[1] It will be worth while stating these in detail.

The "Son of Man coming in His glory," "sitting on the throne of His glory" as judge, is practically verbatim from Enoch xlv. 3, lxii. 5, etc.

For the faithful as "sheep," sinners and Gentiles as other animals, see Enoch xc.

For the blessed on "the right hand" at the resurrection see Test. of Benjamin x. 6.

For the whole idea see Secrets of Enoch ix.: "This place, O Enoch, is prepared for the righteous who . . . make righteous judgment, and give bread to the hungering, and cover the naked with clothing, and raise up the fallen, and help injured orphans . . . for them is prepared this place for eternal inheritance." In ch. x. another place of fire, cold, and other horrors is prepared, also for an eternal inheritance, for those who amongst other sins oppress the poor, "who being able to satisfy the empty, made the hungering to die; being able to clothe, stripped the naked."

For the sequence of the acts of mercy cf. also Test. of Joseph i. 5 ff.:

"I was taken into captivity and His strong hand succoured me.
I was beset with hunger and the Lord himself nourished me.
I was alone and God comforted me.
I was sick and the Lord visited me:
I was in prison and my God showed favour unto me."

It is needless to give special references for the "fire prepared for the devil" and for "aeonian punishment," which are commonplaces of Apocalyptic.

It will be noted that it is the phraseology and the setting of the parable which seem to be borrowed from Apocalyptic, not its essential features—the stress on

It is therefore very probable that, though the parable may in substance go back to Our Lord's own teaching, a good deal of the phraseology is due to modification of His original words either in oral tradition or by the editor of the first Gospel.

Summary of New Testament Teaching

1. The constant features are the sharp division into two classes and the sense of the importance of the choice made in this life. But note that, generally speaking, only those are considered to whom the opportunity of choice has actually been offered; the rest are simply ignored.[1]

2. There is in fact far less about future punishment than is usually supposed.[2] Whole groups of books, including the majority of the Pauline Epistles and the Johannine writings, outside the Apocalypse, do little more than speak in general terms of judgment and death as awaiting the sinner.

3. The language used about future punishment is

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acts of omission and the Judge's identification of Himself with "His brethren." These, so far as I am aware, are original, and the lesson drawn from them is quite independent of the particular character of the penalty inflicted on those who have failed to show charity. The underlying idea is found in Mk. ix. 37 (cf. *v.* 41): "Whosoever shall receive one of these little ones in my name, receiveth me," and if we suppose an authentic parable of Christ's developing this thought, some of its features may well have been emphasised later under the influence of the Apocalyptic ideas which are so prominent in the first Gospel. The point is that it is not necessary to reject the parable as a whole because we find reason to suspect certain phrases in it.

[1] The chief passages which speak of a general judgment are Rom. ii. 14 ff., 2 Cor. v. 10, Rev. xx. 12, and the passages from Acts quoted above (p. 186). It is doubtful whether Mt. xxv. 31 is really universal; it is possible that the reference is to those from "all nations" who have come into contact with the despised and persecuted Christians, "My brethren," and, without being converted themselves, have treated them kindly; so in Mk. ix. 41 the reward is for the cup of cold water given "because ye are Christ's." I do not, however, feel quite confident as to this limitation of the idea.

[2] *N.B.* the confusion caused by the use in A.V. and in popular theology of such terms as "hell," "damnation," "perdition," etc. A recent and regrettable example may be seen in Moore's *The Brook Kerith*, where he makes Our Lord say, "Thou shalt eat my flesh and drink my blood, else perish utterly, and go into eternal damnation" (p. 222). Such words may be justified in their strict etymological meaning, but they have come to have a connotation which suggests everlasting punishment and is in the highest degree misleading.

quite clearly of the same type as that found in the Apocalyptic literature, and is practically confined to a single group of books which is in other ways strongly Apocalyptic in tone. We are therefore fully justified in arguing that it is a direct reflection of the current Apocalyptic teaching. Whilst this does not imply that this side of New Testament teaching can be altogether ignored, it does show that it was not a deliberate creation of Our Lord and His followers, but was simply one of the elements taken over from contemporary thought. Like other elements so taken over, *e.g.* the demonology of the day, it may be subject to very considerable modifications. The belief in the immediate Parousia and an imminent and miraculously manifested end of the age was a similar heritage, and history has proved this to have been untrue in any literal sense.

We must bear in mind that the real and fundamental meaning of any writer is to be found in the ideas which are original and characteristic, not in those which are simply inherited from the current thought of his age. That which is specially characteristic and original in the New Testament is precisely not the Apocalyptic element.

4. We found in the earlier literature that the doctrine owed a good deal to the sense of injustice and the desire for retribution aroused by persecution and oppression, as well as to the intolerance so commonly evoked by religious differences. It may be conceded that the same motives, though in a lesser degree, are at work in the New Testament, especially in Rev., 2 Thess., and Peter and Jude; traces of them are also found in the first Gospel, though not so prominently. At the same time it should be remembered that, with the partial exception of the Apocalypse, there is far more restraint and far less gloating over details than, *e.g.*, in Enoch. And we must never forget that the thought throughout is of the immediate enemies of the Gospel, not of the mass of mankind, whether living or dead, whose fate is practically ignored.

5. On the question of the everlasting nature of punishment, the Apocalyptic books themselves are, as we saw, really vague and indecisive. The same is true of the New Testament. There is no passage which absolutely requires it when due allowance is made for a rhetorical use of quotations from earlier literature and the conventional employment of current figures. In some cases it is a possible interpretation of its language, but the general trend of the New Testament as a whole is definitely in the direction of annihilation.

6. With regard to the teaching of Our Lord the evidence is still less decisive. The belief that He taught everlasting punishment rests mainly on the evidence of the first Gospel. It is a commonplace of criticism that on many points besides this much of the matter which is found only in this Gospel bears very definite traces of the controversies of the sub-Apostolic age. The moment we abandon the position that every saying attributed to Christ in the Gospels must be regarded as a literal and infallible report of His words, we have no choice but to apply critical principles.[1] The general objections to the authenticity of the language about punishment attributed to Him[2] are that it is very often weakly attested, that the form in which it is recorded varies considerably, that it is definitely traceable to contemporary Apocalyptic ideas, and that, as many will hold, it is out of keeping with the general tone of His character and teaching. More will be said on this point later, but admitting for the

[1] On this question I would beg leave to refer to my article on "The Teaching of the Historic Christ" (*Nineteenth Century*, January 1914).

[2] For a recent and very careful discussion of this see Rashdall, *Conscience and Christ*, pp. 294 ff. To those who regard all such criticism as "subjective" it may be said that the moment we question the literal accuracy of any document or report, sacred or secular, we are thrown back upon probabilities which will to some extent be variously estimated by different minds. In this sense all such criticism is "subjective," as is all reasoning which falls short of mathematical proof. But subjective need not be the same as arbitrary, and there are quite cogent and definite principles of historical criticism which we all use in everyday life, *e.g.* we apply them to the various war reports which reach us, rejecting some and accepting others, perhaps with modifications; and we do so on precisely the same kind of principles as those which critics use with regard to the Bible.

moment the truth of this objection, it is obviously sound criticism to regard with some suspicion, and to refuse to build a far-reaching conclusion upon, a definite and not very large class of discordant and exceptional sayings, the origin of which can readily be otherwise explained. Those who hold the doctrine of hell have based it almost entirely on "revelation," *i.e.* on the recorded teaching of Christ and His followers; in many cases they would gladly abandon it, were it not that they felt compelled to hold it on these grounds. If then this supposed basis can be shown to be at best very doubtful, the main argument in favour of the doctrine disappears at once.

7. There are in the Pauline Epistles very definite hints of a certain type of Universalism. Christ is to be all in all; it is the purpose of God to sum up all things in Him; through Him to reconcile all things to Himself (Eph. i. 10, Col. i. 16, 20, iii. 11); He has shut up all unto disobedience that He might have mercy upon all (Rom. xi. 31; see also 1 Cor. xv. 27 ff.). It is not clear whether in such passages St. Paul actually contemplated the salvation of individuals already dead or of the spiritual powers of evil. He seems to be thinking rather of the *cosmos* as a whole and of all classes and types of created beings within it. Rom. xi. refers to the Jewish nation as an entity and to those who chance to be alive at the consummation, rather than to those members of the race who had already refused the Gospel.[1] But whatever the primary meaning of such language, the principles which underlie it, when thought out, cannot allow us to ignore the fate of previous generations, and they are certainly not consistent with the existence of a class of rebellious souls suffering unending torments. It is, however, very difficult to find

[1] Rev. xxi. 24 ff., xxii. 2, refer to a great conversion of the Gentiles during the Millennial Kingdom (see the convincing reconstruction of these chapters by Dr. Charles in the *Expository Times*, xxvi. pp. 54, 119). But (1) only those are included who chance to be alive at the time; (2) the passage is not universalistic since sinners remain without the city.

in the New Testament any real indications of further opportunities after this life, and this applies just as strongly to the heathen who have never heard the message as to those who have heard and refused. If we do believe in repentance after death, we must frankly base our belief on something other than isolated texts.[1]

The Hardening of the Doctrine in later Thought and the Revolt against it

The doctrine of everlasting punishment does not figure either in any creed[2] or in the pronouncements of the first four General Councils.[3] Though it was vigorously debated at the time, the Church remained silent on the subject. Dr. Gore[4] admits that even Universalism, which he himself rejects, "has never been formally condemned by the Church with any ecumenical judgment." At the same time it is only too obvious that the belief in hell soon became dominant both in popular and in official theology. If our contention is correct that this is a misinterpretation of the real teach-

[1] The Lazarus parable does contain such a hint, and the obscure passage in 1 Peter iii. 19 ff. certainly implies the preaching of the Gospel to the dead. It is, however, confined to those who died before the Flood. The supposed traces of a similar idea in Enoch are very doubtful; we may see in 1 Peter rather the influence of the pagan myth of the conquest of the powers of the underworld by an unrecognised divine hero (Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, pp. 32 f.). In any case, we cannot use an isolated passage such as this to explain other writers. St. Paul, the universalist, gives no hint of a similar belief; Eph. iv. 9 has no mention of preaching. The "harrowing of hell" plays a large part in later Christian thought, but the point is mainly the rescue of the good men of old, not the offering of another chance to sinners. In Ignatius, *Magn.* ix. 3, it is the prophets who are rescued. In Hermas, *Sim.* ix. 16, 5, the Apostles descend to baptize "those who have fallen asleep in righteousness." The *descensus* becomes an answer, as in Dante, to the problem of how the good men of old can be saved if baptism and faith in Christ are necessary to salvation; from this point of view it has no bearing on universalism.

[2] The English version of the Hymn of Athanasius has "everlasting," "everlastingly," but these can scarcely be defended as renderings of the original Latin word "aeternus." The Creed is intended to represent the New Testament language; therefore "whatever Our Lord's words mean, the Creed means the same."—Gibson, *The Thirty-Nine Articles*, p. 352.

[3] On the vexed question whether and how far Origen and his doctrines were ever formally condemned, see Pusey, *What is of Faith as to Everlasting Punishment*, p. 137; and Bigg, *Christian Platonists of Alexandria*, ch. viii., esp. pp. 323 ff.

[4] *The Religion of the Church*, p. 91.

ing of the New Testament, how are we to account for its early rise and general acceptance?

There would seem to have been four main influences at work. (1) When Christianity passed from its original Jewish surroundings to the Graeco-Roman world the key was lost to the right interpretation of the language in which many of its doctrines were clothed. The Latin mind in particular tended to force the Eastern metaphors and picturesque language of the New Testament into a literalistic and legal mould. This especially affected the understanding of the eschatological system of thought, out of which, as we have seen, the belief in future punishment developed.

(2) It was not realised that the New Testament, like other documents, must be interpreted in the light of contemporary ideas and with a due regard to the history which lay behind its doctrines. The belief in inspiration led to a mechanical system of interpretation which, whether literal or allegorical, based itself on the letter, and treated all books and texts as equally important. This method already existed as applied to the Old Testament, and it was transferred bodily to the New. In particular it was taken for granted that all the books represented a single homogeneous theology, accepted by all its writers alike. Apparent divergences must be explained away, and in particular silence must be understood as consent. Accordingly those books which really say little or nothing as to everlasting punishment, instead of being counted as witnesses against it, were simply assumed to be in agreement with the doctrine, though, as we have seen, it is in fact almost exclusively confined to contexts where the Jewish eschatological influence is dominant.

(3) The influences which we have found at work in Apocalyptic literature and the New Testament operate with increasing force in the history of the Church. The growth of the belief in hell was largely due to a very intelligible indignation at the cruelty of

persecutors and a desire to stem heresy. Tertullian's[1] outburst of mocking and exultant joy at the coming sight of kings, persecutors, philosophers, and poets writhing in the flames is well known, and Pusey[2] quotes a long catena of passages from the Acts of the Martyrs and similar literature, insisting on the belief in everlasting punishment.

(4) Added to this, there was on the philosophical side the growing belief, inherited from Plato, in the natural immortality of the soul. This led to the ignoring of the *prima facie* meaning of the Biblical passages which speak of annihilation.[3] If the soul is essentially immortal and indissoluble and the possibility of repentance after death is not contemplated, the sinner can only suffer unendingly.

At the same time there have always been isolated voices raised in support of other views. There are hints of a belief in repentance after death, as well as in conditional immortality and annihilation.[4] The outstanding figure in this respect is of course Origen; reference may be made to the full account of his views in Bigg's *Christian Platonists of Alexandria*. The salient points are these. He held that all punishment is remedial; future suffering is not a penalty, but a wholesome reaction by which the soul casts out poison; the "fire" is spiritual and inward. "The sin which is not forgiven in this aeon, or the aeon to come, might yet be blotted out in some one of the aeons beyond."[5] At the same time he apparently believed in a final *poena damni* or exclusion from the sight of God. "The soul which has sinned beyond a certain point can never

[1] *De Spect.* 30.

[2] *What is of Faith as to Everlasting Punishment*, pp. 155-172.

[3] The Jewish conception of the temporary Messianic age had ceased to be familiar, particularly as Millenarianism (the reign of Christ for 1000 years) passed into disrepute. It will be remembered that in the Apocalyptic books the final destruction of sinners is often placed at the close of this period.

[4] For references see *Enc. of Religion and Ethics*, *s.v.* "Annihilation"; "Conditional Immortality"; "Eschatology" (v. p. 388).

[5] Bigg, p. 277.

again become what it once might have been. The 'wise fire' will consume its evil fuel; anguish, remorse, shame, distraction, all torment will end when 'the wood, the hay, the straw' are burnt up. The purified spirit will be brought home, it will no longer rebel; it will acquiesce in its lot; but it may never be admitted within that holy circle where the pure in heart see face to face."[1] At the same time, in view of what he considered the teaching of Scripture, he is sometimes uncertain as to the final fate of those rejected on earth. "Who is that guest who . . . is cast into outer darkness? You will ask whether he remains bound in the outer darkness for ever?—for the words 'for this aeon' or 'for the aeons' are not added—or whether he will in the end be loosed? for it does not appear that anything is written about his future release. It does not seem to me to be safe, seeing I have no full understanding, to pronounce an opinion, especially in a case where Scripture is silent."[2] In the same way it is not clear whether he really believed "that the devil will be saved," though some of his followers seem to have done so.

Origen's views were strenuously combated by Augustine, whose influence prevailed on this, as on other subjects. In fact, to the four reasons already given for the wide spread of the doctrine of hell, the almost unquestioned supremacy of his authority, at least in the west, may be added as a fifth.

From his time, and through the period covered by the Middle Ages, there is little in the development of eschatological theories which need detain us here.[3] The doctrine of Purgatory with its corollaries came to occupy a central place. But this was always a preparation for heaven, not a mitigation of hell. No doubt it provided a temporary half-way house for those who

[1] Bigg, p. 343.
[2] Origen, *In Joan.* xxviii. 7, quoted by Bigg, p. 278.
[3] For John Scotus Erigena and "Dionysius the Areopagite," who were in some sense Universalists, see H. B. Workman, *Christian Thought to the Reformation*, pp. 150 ff., and literature there quoted.

were neither good enough for the one nor bad enough for the other. But it is a mistake to suppose that it practically ousted hell. Dante and mediaeval art and literature in general show that hell remained a serious possibility, not merely for those outside the Church but even for Popes, Bishops, and the highest ecclesiastical dignitaries. The practical authority of the Church, exercised in the last resort by excommunication, rested largely on the belief, or at least the fear, that its condemnation did in fact carry with it the certainty of everlasting punishment. This was the secret of its power over heretics and secular princes. Gregory's excommunication of Henry IV. and the Emperor's humiliation at Canossa are the outstanding proof of the seriousness with which the power of the keys was regarded, a seriousness bound up with the belief in the reality of the torments of an unending hell. "His [Gregory's] premises once admitted—and no one dreamt of denying them—the reasonings by which he established the superiority of spiritual to temporal jurisdiction were unassailable. With his authority, in whose hands are the keys of heaven and hell, whose word can bestow eternal bliss or plunge in everlasting misery, no other earthly authority can compete or interfere: if his power extends over the infinite, how much more must he be supreme over the finite."[1] At the same time the fact that such anathemas were sometimes disregarded combines with the extraordinary flippancy with which, then as now, hell was often treated in art and literature to suggest the existence of an undercurrent of scepticism. The prevalent attitude was no doubt very much that of "Pascal's wager": the Church's view of the future might not be true; on the other hand it might. And with so much to gain and lose if it did turn out to be true, it was better to be on the safe side and stake what you conveniently could upon it.

The Reformation, where it swept away the doctrine

[1] Bryce, *Holy Roman Empire*, p. 161.

of Purgatory, left heaven and hell in still sharper opposition. Everlasting punishment remained the official teaching of the Reformed churches. Opposition came mainly not from theologians but from philosophers, such as Spinoza, Hobbes, Locke, and Mill. Isolated protests were however heard from time to time from within the Church.[1] It would take too long, and would not really be much to our purpose, to attempt to discuss these here. We can only add a few words on the modern history of the controversy within the Church of England.

Here an important stage was marked by the publication in 1860 of *Essays and Reviews*. Mr. Wilson closed his essay on "The National Church" with a very cautious and moderate expression of his belief in Universalism. This formed one of the counts in the "Essays and Reviews" trial. After the Ecclesiastical Court had condemned the writers, the judgment was reversed by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, the part of the Judgment with which we are concerned running as follows :—

"We are not required, or at liberty, to express any opinion upon the mysterious question of the eternity of future punishment, further than to say that we do not find in the formularies to which this article refers any such distinct declaration of our church upon the subject as to require us to condemn as penal the expression of a hope by a clergyman that even the ultimate pardon of the wicked who are condemned in the Day of Judgment may be consistent with the will of Almighty God."

The ecclesiastical opinion of the day still took another view, and a Declaration signed by 11,000 clergy expressed the belief that the Church of England teaches in the words of our blessed Lord that the punishment of the "cursed" equally with the "life"

[1] See Farrar, *Eternal Hope*, Appendix : "Brief Sketch of Eschatological Opinions in the Church."

of the "righteous" is "everlasting." Similarly Dr. Pusey writes: "If the highest Court of Appeal allows our clergy to take the word everlasting in a sense contrary to its known English meaning . . . how can our people believe that we mean anything that we say?"

A few years previously (in 1853) a similar spirit had been shown when Maurice was deprived of his Chair at King's College on account of a very tentative rejection of the current doctrine of hell and the expression of a hope that some sinners might have an opportunity of repentance after death.[1] Many will remember the storm raised by the publication of Farrar's *Eternal Hope*, which was on much the same lines. It is worth while recalling these controversies as some indication of the change which has come over the theological world in recent years with regard to this doctrine. It is probably safe to say that except in a few restricted circles a living belief in hell has practically vanished to-day in the Church of England. It is no doubt still held conventionally by many, but it is not seriously preached or taught in spite of the efforts made from time to time in the correspondence columns of the religious press to galvanise it into life. And now the semi-official theology of the Church is falling into line with what has long been the instinctive attitude of lay opinion. The present Bishop of Oxford in a Manual of Membership, "intended as a summary statement of the religion of the catholic church," while rejecting "Universalism," abandons the strict doctrine of hell. "I do not think . . . we are absolutely shut up into the almost intolerable belief in unending conscious torment for the lost. . . . Final moral ruin may involve, I cannot but think, such a dissolution of personality as carries with it the cessation of personal consciousness. In this way the final ruin of irretrievably lost spirits, awful as it is to contemplate, may be found consistent

[1] Tennyson's poem "To the Rev. F. D. Maurice" refers to this.

with St. Paul's anticipation of a universe in which ultimately God is to be all in all—which does not seem to be really compatible with the existence of a region of everlastingly tormented and rebellious spirits." [1]

There can be no doubt that the impression that a belief in everlasting punishment is an essential element in the official theology of the Church has long been, and still is, one of the greatest stumbling-blocks in the minds of serious men. If it does not lead to the rejection of Christianity itself, it prevents them associating themselves with any of the churches. It is well, therefore, to emphasise the fact that according to the strictest interpretation of her formularies considerable latitude is now allowed to her members, at any rate within the Church of England.

The Spirit and the Letter of the New Testament Teaching

The modern mind, then, with some unanimity rejects, either explicitly or implicitly, the doctrine of hell. While it may not always believe in the ultimate salvation of all men, it does hold that the majority of souls will be purified by discipline after death and will gradually attain, if not to the fulness of the beatific vision, at least to some measure of a profitable and happy state of being. We must now consider how far this is really compatible with what we have seen to be the teaching of the New Testament. Let us remind ourselves once more that the belief in hell depends upon the words of the Bible to an extent which is probably true of no other doctrine. We have already seen reason to hold that its teaching is at best ambiguous and not always consistent with itself, and this fact alone should be fatal to the doctrine as a necessary matter of faith. But though the New Testament is not decisive as to everlasting punishment, the difficulty is that it does

[1] Gore, *The Religion of the Church*, pp. 92 f.

definitely contemplate the existence of two clearly defined classes—the sheep and the goats, the saved and the lost—and it does not explicitly suggest any possibility of improvement hereafter for those on the wrong side of the line, whether they are there because they have been deliberately rebellious or are only unconverted through no fault of their own. Now there is no getting away from the fact that those on the wrong side of the line constitute a large proportion of those whom on a *prima facie* view the language of the New Testament contemplates. Few enter in at the strait gate[1]; the foolish virgins are half the number. It is clear that the "tares" and the "goats" stand for a class, which, though indefinite, is quite considerable. Whether in the Pauline Epistles, or in the fourth Gospel, it is perfectly obvious that those who are not saved by faith in Christ are by no means a negligible fraction. It has been a commonplace that the leaven of true Christians must always be small.

Attempts are often made to remove the difficulty by arguing that we are never told of the damnation of any specified individual, that God alone is judge, and that there is always the possibility that the soul may have accepted Christ at the moment of death. Pusey[2] goes through the list of notorious sinners of the Bible—Ahab, Absalom, Solomon, Nebuchadnezzar, Antiochus Epiphanes—and argues with regard to each one that he may have repented at the last. Now we are quite sure that the writers of the Jewish Apocalypses, or of 4 Maccabees, had not the least intention of excluding an Antiochus[3] from the fire they describe,

[1] See Lk. xiii. 23 ff. (Mt. vii. 13). In answer to the question, "Are there few that be saved?" (cf. 2 Esdras vii., viii.) Our Lord refuses to define the proportion, but He does say that "many" shall fail to enter the Kingdom, and the following verses emphasise the same fact.

[2] *What is of Faith as to Everlasting Punishment*, pp. 12 ff.

[3] It is true that in 1 Mac. vi., 2 Mac. ix. Antiochus is represented as filled with remorse at his oppression of the Jews, and as recognising in his illness the hand of divine vengeance. Such a touch has an obvious dramatic fitness, but neither in 2 nor in 4 Maccabees is it suggested that he will thus escape his future doom. Punishment after death is not referred to in 1 Maccabees.

nor had the author of Revelation any idea of placing Nero and his satellites in the work of persecution among the redeemed arrayed in white robes. And the argument is really a good example of a well-known fallacy. It holds good "distributively" but not "collectively." It may apply to any given individual, but it cannot be extended to the whole class. If it really means that the great majority of such sinners repent "between the stirrup and the ground," it waters down the idea of hell quite as effectually as any theory of future opportunity. But it is even less ethical, and it is untrue to observed experience. As a warning against any presumptuous attempt to anticipate the judgment of God by passing sentence on any one individual it is of course valuable, but it does not ease the problem of what must be, on the ordinary view, the large number of the lost. All attempts to retain a theoretical hell, while suggesting that probably no one goes there, are in fact diametrically opposed to the teaching of the New Testament. The one point on which this is quite clear is that only a fraction are fitted for and receive the Kingdom. The question is whether those who do not are really condemned to hell. If they are, hell is by no means empty, whatever be our doubts as to the fate of any particular person.

Again the issue is often confused by language used about what is technically known as the *poena damni*, which figures as we saw in Origen's theory. It is argued that the soul of the sinner is worse off throughout eternity as the result of his sin, that his God-given faculties have not been so fully developed as they might have been. At the same time it enjoys something which might be called life; it is not an aimless existence of suffering, but one of growth, activity, and hope, however much it falls short of the full vision of God which under other circumstances it might have attained This is in fact very much the view which will be advocated in this paper, but the point at the moment is that

it does not, as is often maintained, agree with the teaching of the New Testament, understood in anything like its literal sense. It certainly does not agree with it interpreted in terms of everlasting punishment, nor is it equivalent to the doctrine of annihilation which, as we saw, is sometimes the most reasonable deduction from its language. Fire, darkness, exclusion, and death are not the figures of a life good so far as it goes, though truncated of much which might have been.

It is best in fact to admit quite frankly that any view of the future destiny of those "on the wrong side of the line" which is to be tolerable to us to-day must go beyond the explicit teaching of the New Testament. It has come to be recognised that this is the case with other questions. Our views of slavery, the position of women, the social order, the claims of art and beauty, are not limited by what the New Testament writers actually say on these subjects. We claim the right in all such cases to develop the essential principles of Christianity. It will be a great gain when the same attitude is adopted quite explicitly with regard to the future of sinners. We have indeed seen reason to believe that the New Testament teaching is not in fact so extreme as is usually supposed, that it is ambiguous and not always consistent with itself. But it does not really give us all that we want, and it only leads to insincerity if we try to satisfy ourselves by artificial explanations of its language. And we are in the end on surer ground when as Christians we claim the right to go beyond the letter, since we do so under the irresistible leading of the moral principles of the New Testament and of Christ Himself.

It has lately been remarked with reference to social problems that we often "underrate the ethical driving force of the revolutionary ideas."[1] This certainly holds good of the question we are now considering. The impossibility of believing that all who are not saved in this life are in any sense lost for ever arises not from

[1] *Report of the Archbishops' Committee on Church and State*, p. 257.

philosophical or critical assumptions, but from definitely moral principles. We saw that the belief in future punishment itself owed much to the ethical motive which demanded due vengeance on the persecutor and the oppressor. It was based on the sense of justice and the desire that there should be a compensation in the next world for the wrongs of this. At the time this marked a real ethical advance, and it contains elements for which we must find room in any final solution. But it is not the highest stage, and it is the teaching and the Spirit of Christ Himself which enable us now to rise to something higher. It is our belief in the Fatherhood and love of God as revealed in Christ which makes the idea of unending torment strictly intolerable.[1] If a dog acquired irremediably vicious habits, making him a nuisance and a danger, what should we say to a master who, instead of shooting him at once, chained him up to starve and torture him until he had "expiated" the mischief he had done? If it be urged that in the case of a responsible personality "justice" requires that sin should be followed by a certain amount of "retributive suffering," apart from its effect on the character of the

[1] This can hardly be put better than it is in the Life of that strange saint of God, John Smith of Harrow. "One of the elder boys once opened his heart to John Smith upon the subject of future punishment. . . . 'What proof,' I said, 'have you that all will be eventually restored?' I shall never forget the way in which he stopped, put his hand on my shoulder, and looking up to heaven, said in his expressive voice, 'Our Father'" (*Life*, p. 54).

One result of the dropping of any general preaching of the doctrine of hell has been that those who continue to use the conventional language have forgotten what it really implies. We should do well to exercise our imagination by trying to think what everlasting punishment means. We may look at some of the quotations given in Farrar's *Eternal Hope* (especially pp. xxvi, 26 f.), or better still, read for ourselves the Works of Jonathan Edwards, and see it all in the full horror of its context. The writer will never forget the impression made upon him years ago when, on taking down one of these from the shelves of a library and opening it almost at random, he lighted on the following: "The sight of hell torments will exalt the happiness of the Saints for ever; it will give them a more lively relish" (*Works*, vol. vii. p. 521). If eternal punishment is really consistent both with the justice and the love of God and a completely good universe, it does follow that the righteous must approve of it and even rejoice in it.

It is a minor point whether we think of it in terms of material and bodily sufferings, or of mental and spiritual pangs. Those who reject the former usually go on to insist that the latter are the more terrible. Of course if we regard these as remedial and as leading to repentance and progress, they are on a different plane, but then this is not hell.

sufferer, that punishment must at least bear some proportion to the sin. To say that any sin *deserves* an "infinite" penalty is an outrage to the very sense of fairness which the argument invokes. Many will find it difficult to conceive of the God of Jesus inflicting any punishment after death which is not in some way remedial and disciplinary; it is certainly impossible to regard Him as condemning any sinner to unending and purposeless torments. To fall back on the arbitrary decrees of God, to say that in this respect His ways are not as our ways, and that the highest ethical judgments we can form are no criterion of His actions, is simply fatal to all religion. "We who believe in Christ know nothing more certainly than the character of God. We know that He is perfect love, perfect equity. We are quite justified in refusing to believe about Him anything which would be inconsistent with the highest goodness we can conceive."[1]

Once more there are grave moral difficulties with regard to the belief in the dissolution of personality as the universal fate of sinners. For it is an admission of the failure of the love of God. The absolute value of each soul is a cardinal doctrine of Christianity. We must believe that God created each soul for a good end, for the happiness of communion with Himself and others, and of playing a part in the working out of His purpose for the universe. The soul that ceases to be represents, therefore, a failure of the divine purpose, however much that failure may be due to its own sin. It means that love has failed to overcome the obstacles. If it is difficult to believe this of any souls it is almost impossible to believe it of a large fraction of mankind.[2]

[1] Gore, *Religion of the Church*, p. 90. On the question of the validity of our ethical judgments as a criterion of God's ways, I would venture to refer to what I have written elsewhere in *The Faith and the War*, pp. 193 f.

[2] See above, p. 210, on the point that the New Testament does in fact regard a large proportion as "on the wrong side of the line." The question naturally arises as to why the New Testament writers failed to realise the moral difficulties involved in this position, difficulties which were plain to the author of 4 Esdras. It may be suggested that they were completely possessed with exultation at the extension of God's love to which they bore witness. Potentially all Gentiles were admitted on

The force of these ethical difficulties is widely felt, but it is feared on the other hand that to surrender the belief in hell or in final annihilation would be to deny the eternal consequences of right or wrong choice, to cut at the root of the sense of ultimate responsibility, to minimise the awfulness of sin and remove a main incentive to the struggle against it. If everything is bound to come right in the end, why need we bother overmuch?

In the first place we may reply that it is in fact very doubtful how far the fear of future punishment is a very effective deterrent against sin or incentive to virtue. The ages when it was treated most seriously are certainly not the most moral or the purest in church history. Tyrrell's experience is perhaps not very common when he writes: "I cannot remember any time of my childhood, or afterwards, when the fear of hell or desire of heaven had the slightest practical effect on my conduct";[1] but it is quite certain that the ultimate effect of a threat which the conscience does not acknowledge as just or moral cannot be either very great or desirable.[2]

In the second place, we are not shut up to the view that it will be "all right" for every one after death, that good and bad, loving and selfish, will all find themselves equally well off. The New Testament division into two classes does no doubt correspond to some divi-

equal terms; in fact many more were to be saved than any one had expected. This was enough for the moment, and they did not go on to face the problem of those who refused the message or had not heard it. To us the difficulty is not that some Gentiles should be saved but that any soul should be finally lost.

[1] *Autobiography of George Tyrrell*, i. pp. 22.

[2] An anonymous satirist has stated the argument unmercifully, but not unfairly:

> To others the doctrine of love may be dear;
> I own I confide in the doctrine of fear:
> There's nothing, I think, so effective to make
> Our weak fellow-creatures their errors forsake,
> As to tell them abruptly with unchanging front,
> "You'll be damned if you do! You'll be damned if you don't."
>
> A new generation forthwith must arise,
> With Beelzebub pictured before their young eyes,
> They'll be brave, they'll be true, they'll be gentle and kind
> Because they have Satan for ever in mind.

sion in the next world, the nature of which we can only dimly imagine. But we do not interpret it as final in the sense that it excludes all hope of future progress and amendment for those in the lower class. We may, if we will, retain the language of fire, worms, darkness, and even death, so long as we interpret them in terms of purgatory[1] and not of a final hell. Discipline and suffering, pangs of repentance and the sense of what might have been, delay in the fulfilment of God's purpose for the self and the sense that His love has been thwarted, will surely all be elements in the purifying process through which the soul will have to pass. Such a doctrine of the future is not an easygoing ignoring of sin, while it does satisfy our ethical demands.

And though here we refuse to dogmatise, we keep open the solemn possibility that final dissolution will be the ultimate end for such souls as have completely lost the power to recognise and desire goodness and respond to the love of God. But we hold that so far as we can see, this stage is seldom reached in this life. Even in the worst we know, we ourselves can always find some spark of goodness, some traits of love and unselfishness; all evangelical work depends on this principle. So long as there is the faintest spark of the divine life in the soul, there remains the possibility of better things, and the love of God has something on which to work. We dare not abandon the hope of progress and forgiveness after death for such a soul.[2] Only

[1] As has often been pointed out, it is very remarkable that the modern Roman doctrine in its most widely prevalent form teaches that Purgatory is only penal and vindictive; it is the place where the soul, *which is already saved and forgiven*, works out the temporal consequences of its sin. The growing modern use of the term, like the early mediaeval, regards it as a place of purification and growth, while of course it rejects the various superstitions connected with it. Cf. p. 139.

[2] A popular view, keeping the theoretical doctrine of hell but attempting to minimise it as far as possible, holds that in such cases the soul is redeemed in this life by an unconscious faith in Christ, however rudimentary. But this, like Pusey's extension of death-bed repentances, only keeps the form of the orthodox language at the expense of its meaning. The New Testament writers did not include in the Kingdom all who died with any unextinguished spark of goodness, even in the somewhat rare cases where they contemplate salvation without a personal faith in Christ (see above, p. 198).

where the Spirit is definitely quenched will the soul cease to be.[1]

As to details, the how and where of progress, the stages through which the soul must pass, and where it will finally rest, we may refuse to dogmatise, or even to surmise. We are only certain about our religious and ethical principles—that the God revealed in Christ is a God of love, that each soul He has made has an absolute value, that He cannot allow His children to suffer hopelessly and without purpose, that His love has supreme power to draw out the best in every soul and to destroy evil. These principles are admitted by all Christians, but they have not always been applied unflinchingly and consistently to the doctrine of the future.[2] Augustine speaks of Origen's followers who tried to do so as "deceived by a certain human kindness." But it is a very halting faith which fears that a thoroughgoing belief in the love of God and in the reflection of that love which we find in our own conscience and actions at their best will deceive us. The Good Shepherd who seeks for the lost sheep will not rest till he has saved the goats.

> The infant Church, of love she felt the tide
> Stream on her from her Lord's yet recent grave.
>
> And then she smiled; and in the Catacombs,
> With eye suffused but heart inspired true,
> On those walls subterranean, where she hid
> Her head 'mid ignominy, death, and tombs,
> She her Good Shepherd's hasty image drew—
> And on his shoulders, not a lamb, a kid.[3]

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[1] This is not quite the doctrine of "conditional immortality." That says the soul is not immortal till it has won eternal life; this says it is immortal till it has forfeited its boon by an extreme of wilful sin. More and more we see that it is goodness which is essentially immortal and there is no serious philosophical difficulty in believing in the dissolution of the completely bad personality.

[2] There is food for thought in a pregnant remark of Dr. Charles: "The eschatology of the nation is always the last part of its religion to experience the transforming power of new ideas and facts. The eschatology of Israel was at times six hundred years behind its theology." "So far as the Christian Churches hold fast to the doctrine [*sc.* of eternal punishment] taken over from Judaism at the Christian era, their eschatology is nearly two thousand years behind their doctrine of God and Christ."—*Between the Old and New Testaments*, pp. 128, 131.

[3] M. Arnold, *The Good Shepherd with the Kid.*

VI

A DREAM OF HEAVEN

BY

A. CLUTTON-BROCK

SYNOPSIS

Myths of Heaven and their meaning. They give us life emptied of irrelevance. That irrelevance is the struggle for life—from which we escape in art. In art men are led to prophesy of Heaven. But the myths of the artists are taken literally and misunderstood. So comes the conventional idea of Heaven, of characterless angels and saints. An example. But we are not fit for the perfection we imagine in Heaven. We must need to be trained to it and yet to remain ourselves. But there we shall be rid of all the unreal part of ourselves, and the reality in us will recognise the reality of Heaven. The problem of the wicked. Purgatory will really be enrichment. We know that what we need is enrichment. How shall we be rid of the evil in ourselves? By punishing ourselves. The pain of Heaven will be in our sense of our inadequacy. The reality and uncertainty of Heaven.

VI

A DREAM OF HEAVEN

THERE have been many myths of a future blessed state, Valhalla, the Islands of the Blessed, Dante's Paradise and the Visions of the Apocalypse ; and there is no truth in any of them except for those who know that they are myths—in Plato's sense of that word—and for whom they express a belief that can be expressed only in an artistic form. These myths, for those who understand their nature, have the same relation to reality that music has to actual experience. Music is an expression of actual experience, but in terms of pure emotion not of representation. So the myth is an expression of what is believed to be real but not in terms of representation. It is art, not science ; it is like music, an answer given by the mind to reality, an answer which does not reproduce reality but transmutes it into another form. There is prophecy in it, as there is in music, the prophecy of another state of being freed from all the insignificance of this ; and of that state of being man can prophesy only by creating it in an artistic form. "Heaven is music," Campion says ; it is life become music ; and when men dream and talk, as they naturally do, of this heaven of music, they mean, if it has any reality to them, not a perpetual singing of hymns but a life that is music, a life not emptied of its content but freed from its irrelevance, as poetry is speech not emptied of content but freed from irrelevance.

This irrelevance in life is, for all of us, the struggle

for life, the fact that we are here tied and bound by a perpetual effort to go on living. It is from the thought of that struggle that we escape in art. Our common speech is hampered by haphazard necessities; it is a hand-to-mouth means of expressing our wants and has been developed in the expression of them. But we have always the idea of a speech freed from these wants and no longer at the mercy of haphazard necessities; and we make that speech in poetry. The rhythm of poetry is itself a freed movement, which has escaped from the pressure of the struggle for life; it is a movement willed by the poet, not imposed upon him by emergencies, a movement in which he expresses himself and not his wants. And so the dance is freer and more expressive walking; and, as for music, it is sound freed altogether, sound become purely rhythmical and expressive in itself, being freed even from the fetters of sense. So all rhythm is a prophecy of a freer state of being, a state in which man escapes from the struggle for life to the expression of his own values, his own ideals; and in all art, the more completely it is art, there is the sense of heaven, whether it be a triumphant prophecy of it or an aching desire for it. Even in despair the artist conjures up the freedom of that heaven of which he despairs; for he expresses his despair in the free speech of heaven.

And this free speech leads men to prophesy of Heaven, almost without knowing it. Morris suddenly, in a poem to Iceland, is carried by his own music into a myth of Iceland which his music brings to life in his mind:—

Ah! when thy Balder comes back, and bears from the heart of the Sun
Peace and the healing of pain, and the wisdom that waiteth no more,
And the lilies are laid on thy brow 'mid the crown of the deeds thou hast done,
And the roses spring up by thy feet that the rocks of the wilderness wore;

Ah! when thy Balder comes back and we gather the gains he hath won,
Shall we not linger a little to talk of thy sweetness of old,
Yea, turn back awhile to thy travail, whence the Gods stood aloof to behold?

There is the desire making a prophecy of what it desires; there is the poet making a heaven out of what he loves in this world and impelled to make it by the heavenly freedom of his own speech.

But, though in these heavens of art life is freed from its slavery to the struggle for life, it is not therefore emptied of content but rather enriched with more of it. It is a fuller life because a freer; and the artist makes his myth to express his longing for freedom, for a positive freedom. He conceives of a state in which men shall act without the spur of the struggle for life. That is what immortality means to him; above all, it is the consciousness of freedom, it is an everlasting now, into which man can throw the whole of himself without looking before or after. It is not that he will live a life emptied of sorrow, but that he will rejoice or mourn always with the freedom of passion, and not for himself. For it is the struggle for life that binds us to ourselves; the tyranny of the struggle for life is the tyranny of a self that cannot be forgotten; and that is what the constant passion in the mind of man rebels against.

But the myths of the artist—and the prophets and seers who created the Christian myth were not the less but rather the more artists because they had religious genius—are always being misunderstood by those who have not imagination enough to conceive of a life which is still really alive though freed from the struggle for life. For them Heaven is mere idleness; and they cast about for something to do in it. They assume that it must be a pious idleness; they are told by the artist in his myths that it is the free life of art; but they do not understand what he means by this. So to them this free life of art means worship, not for the

sake of worship, but because worship is a means of acquiring merit, because God is supposed to like it. Heaven is music, they are told by the poets; and they suppose this to be a statement of literal fact. So, if they are members of the Church of England, they suppose that Heaven is an eternity of Hymns ancient and modern, sung to God because He likes to hear them.

> Where the bright seraphim in burning row
> Their loud uplifted angel trumpets blow,
> And the Cherubic host in thousand choirs
> Touch their immortal harps of golden wires.

Empty that of the artist's passion for positive freedom; empty it of the meaning in its music, which is all its meaning; regard it, not as a myth, but as a statement of fact, and it becomes the conventional notion of heaven, as far from what Milton meant as a reproduction of Fra Angelico's Paradise on a picture post-card is from what Fra Angelico meant when he painted the picture.

It is a curious fact that the conventional idea of Heaven, produced by people for the most part morbidly absorbed in morals, is a state of being in which art will be the only activity. Heaven to them is music, and music which they will all know by heart, like Church hymns. But a decent state of being cannot be all art any more than all morals. The artist must live; he must experience before he can give out his experience in art; and he enjoys the taking in as much as the giving out. Besides, he must produce his own art out of the exercise of all his other faculties. He must in fact be free; and freer in a future state than here, if it is to be anything like Heaven and not rather on the way to Hell. Hence it is that the conventional Heaven of the conventionally devout is unreal; unreal even to them because it is bad art, art emptied of content and so life emptied of content. It is joy, but a joy they cannot conceive, and therefore an empty conventional joy; the joy of an Academy picture,

or of that hymn which cries, "Oh, let us be joyful," without knowing how to set about it.

Our notions of perfection, in so far as they come at all from our actual experience, are notions really of sudden and extreme joy, of achievement, recognition, or reconciliation. This joy there must be in Heaven; but it always has to be earned, and could not be itself if it were not earned. We cannot, so to speak, pay a life subscription for it and have it without further effort throughout eternity. Nor should we be satisfied with a universe in which we could. Such a Heaven would be like an everlasting club, in which we should all pass the time, having retired from business. But the best of men do not wish to retire from business; they wish rather for a business freed from the struggle for life, and all the more intense for that reason.

Again, in the conventional Heaven all the human beings there are, like the hymns they sing, emptied of content; they are made good by losing their characters. And this comes of men's impotence to conceive a life freed from the struggle for life. That is why the myths are meaningless to them, since they are myths of a life freed from the struggle for life yet not emptied of its content; and of human beings freed also, but not emptied of their character, and not left with nothing to do. Heaven would not be Heaven to us if we ourselves, and all others, were made good by losing our characters. If we are to love each other in Heaven it must be we ourselves that love each other, ourselves with all the savour of individual character still about us. If we think of Heaven as a real place it is as a heaven of real people doing real things. I imagine to myself, for instance, Henry James in Heaven. If it were the conventional state of blessedness, what a polite but persistent note of interrogation he would sound in it; how he would still labour incessantly to find the phrase that would exactly describe his dislike of it. At least, if he did not, he would be no longer Henry James, but a

spirit beatified, like the spirits in the bad pictures, by being emptied of content. Just as he used to watch the splendours of the rich, seeking all the while his phrases for them and making the splendours tolerable to himself only with the phrases; so he would watch the four-and-twenty elders casting down their golden crowns beside the glassy sea.[1]

"Yes," he would say, "it is a ritual, most impressive no doubt, all that one can imagine of disciplined ardour. There is achievement, a very real achievement, in it; and yet I find myself asking more and more insistently—Why? and above all—Why so often? I cannot conceal from myself that it all seems to belong to the past, to be a little musty and romantic, like the smell of incense in a Baroque church. I take off my hat to it of course; one must be grateful to an entertainment so splendid, so finished—but will it never be finished? That is what I find myself asking, as I say, with ever-increasing insistence. Let us come away, my dear fellow, to some quiet place, if we can find one, and talk it all over." His state of blessedness, if he were still himself, would be talking it all over with an enhanced power of hinting, in involved but exquisitely adjusted sentences, just what he would prefer instead of it.

In any future life we may have a great access of knowledge and power; but that access must come to us ourselves. It is I myself that will experience it. It *is* I and so it *will be* I. The *will be* must be connected with the *is*; or I shall not be I. In many ideas of a future state the *will be* is not connected with the *is* at all through the I, and that is why so many men cease to believe in a future state at all or even to desire it. They cannot imagine themselves as being, if they are not to be themselves.

But are any of us, being what we are, fit for a life

[1] Henry James must have admired, as much as any man, the magnificent imagery of this scene. He would be wearied by a Heaven in which it was not imagery but fact.

without the struggle for life? We may be able to conceive it, to prophesy of it, in art; but art here is not life; and we must never forget that. Life here is not music, but a struggle for life which at best rises, at rare moments, into music. Beauty for us, righteousness for us, flower out of the struggle for life; seeming to be wonderful by-products of it, and yet the by-products for which we live. A man of science said to me once that the struggle for life is only a pass examination; you must pass it so that you may go on to the real content of life, and rise to its real meaning. But we have to be passing it all the time; and could we rise to the real content of life at all, if we were not always passing it? We have this power of rising above it for a moment; all of us have it, even if we are not artists; but could we have it if there were not the struggle to rise above? That is the question we must always ask ourselves; and because we cannot answer yes, we know that we are not fit for Heaven, even if it be there waiting for us. We are not fit for a life free from the struggle for life. Out of that very struggle arises for us fellowship between men and the love of a mother for her child, the wild virtues from which Christianity has drawn its idea of God himself. Love, fellowship, these come to us out of the struggle for life; it is through that very struggle that we transcend it, just as beauty comes into objects of use through their use. Divorce them from their use, and the beauty is meaningless; and so, it seems to us, we should be meaningless if we were divorced from our struggle for life. If we were turned suddenly into Angels we should be but domestic pets kept by God.

We are all so unfit for perfection that it would be a nightmare to us if we were thrown into it. God is not so cruel as that, and if He loves us, He loves us for what we are. He does not wish to change us into something utterly different. He must have liked

Henry James, as he was here; He could not wish to change him into a pattern saint, so that he might enjoy a pattern Heaven. Besides, our capacity for enjoyment is ourselves; and we exist in a relation with real things, in a relation already with God who is real even here and will be more real hereafter. But He is real to us in these real things, and in the very imperfection of them which is akin to our own imperfection. There is always something homely to us in our sense of Him, and we are most sure of it in homely and humble and very imperfect things, when we suddenly discover their beauty by our own effort. As the poet says of children, "God's speech is on their stammering tongue, and His compassion in their smile." But we have to find it. It is not forced upon us like the finished charms of a society beauty or the splendour of a grand hotel. These things are unreal, however much we may think we admire them; because we ourselves make no answering effort to them. What they have to give us is forced upon us, like the condescensions of a kind lady to the poor. Heaven cannot be like that or it would be Hell to all except the abject. No; the future life must be more real, not less; and we too shall be more real both to ourselves and to each other. Already we are the children of God, and that means that we are growing into a kind of equality with Him. This equality cannot be given to us or it would not be equality. We must grow into it and be always growing. God is love before He is power; power is merely an attribute of the love; and because God is love we must have an independence of Him. He could not love us if we were His creatures in the old mechanical sense. He can love us only if we are ourselves, as He is Himself; and we are equal with Him in that we are ourselves, and not creatures made to love Him like mechanical toys for His amusement. What we call creation is the gift of independent life without which we could not be loved or love. And we must keep

this notion of independent life in all our ideas of a future state, or it will not be life at all.

And this future life must be such that it will accommodate all the actual people whom we know here well enough to love them. But, on the other hand, it will not accommodate our ideas of the people whom we do not know and do not love. It will not contain our ideas of the Germans, or the German ideas of us. These are in the main phantoms of this life ; for it is infested with phantoms that we throw up out of ourselves, that are, as we say, subjective. For here we have not enough commerce with reality and are always making unreal substitutes for it. The madman is one who cannot face reality and who is always altering it in his own mind and believing in his alterations. And we all have this tendency to madness. We throw out these phantoms and live among them. But the future life will be swept clean of them and we shall leave them behind us like dust and litter when we change houses. It will be swept clean of our hatreds, our hostile generalisations about hostile classes and peoples, our sense of status, our bad art, our formulae, moral, intellectual, and aesthetic, our habit of valuing the temporal as the eternal. These are the phantoms, our own absurd creations, that we shall leave behind with death. They are not part of reality, as dreams are not part of our waking hours. We shall feel them gone like a nightmare, when we wake from it, but we ourselves with all our capacities still imperfect will not be gone.

The mere act of dying cannot, of course, free a man at once from all capacity for illusion. Some men have false standards of value so deeply engrained in them, they have trained themselves so thoroughly into blindness to reality, that on the threshold of the next life they may begin again to create for themselves new phantoms and new delusions. But, at least, there will be the possibility of a fresh start.

If the universe, if reality, is really a home to us, we shall find it more of a home when we are rid of the litter and phantoms of this life, which are here our property and not ourselves. And we shall come into this home, not as strangers needing to learn the customs and the language, but as exiles returning with memories awakened at every step. Everywhere we shall recognise those people and things that are according to our idea and memory of home, as we now recognise a great tune when we hear it for the first time. It is as if we were helping to make it ourselves. It is we ourselves that speak in it and say what we have always wanted to say. So this future life will seem to be ours and always to have been ours; only we have never managed to live in it before. It will be the expression of what we always knew about reality but could not even dare to whisper to ourselves. Nor will it seem to be a reward to us but rather something that we have been fools not to make for ourselves before. Music is not a prize for being good; it is not something that the musician imposes upon us, but a revelation that suddenly we share with him. And we can share it only because in our values we are his equals and of like mind with him, though we could not have expressed our minds without his help. That is an image of our equality with God. He makes the music but we recognise it; and He does not make the music for Himself but for us; His joy is in our recognition of it, and to be one with us in that recognition.

What we have in common with each other is this power of recognition of the same thing, the same God, the same reality, *quod semper*, *quod ubique*, *quod ab omnibus*. How much of what separates us from each other is in those phantoms which we throw up out of our own minds and which fill the spiritual air between us and pester us with the sting and buzz of our own egotism! When they are gone it will

be an ampler aether, a diviner air, in which we shall recognise each other and shall be more purely ourselves. There, too, we shall not be born as we are here into a life infested with the phantoms of past minds that have gone and left them behind, with bad art, and formulae, and inherited rancours. But this future will not be unsubstantial because free of all those phantoms ; rather it will be far more real, for it is the phantoms here that afflict us with a sense of unreality, cutting us off from that fellowship in which alone reality can be found. Reality, to me, here, is in what I love, not in what I hate ; and I do not love from mere habit and just what happens to be round me. I love from recognition of what is everlastingly lovable ; and this will last into a future life. That everlastingly lovable will be the connection between the future life and this one, as I myself shall be the connection. It is the spirit that gives form, and the beauty of things made by man is the form given to them by the spirit of man. So, as the spirit will persist, the beauty will persist also and will be of the same nature, whether it come from man or from God, and whatever its material may be. The beauty we shall recognise even if its material be strange to us. We shall not have to learn it all afresh ; and we shall recognise it the more easily because all our present ugly phantoms of beauty will be gone. So will the false phantoms we mistake for truth, and the evil phantoms we miscall goodness.

In this life progress means that we become freer of the tyranny of the past. I am aware of progress in myself when I am able suddenly to live in the present and no longer to see it only through the phantoms of my own past. Only then do I become myself and not something else subject to what I have been. The difficulty, for us, is to go on being freshly ourselves in an eternally fresh relation with what is. We are always falling behind our actual experience

judging it as if it were a something that had happened before, as if it were actually in the past for us; and so we judge other men as if they were tied by their past. That is how we find it difficult to forget and to forgive. They are to us what they have done; and we become to ourselves what we have done; and so come to think of all things as bound by a chain of cause and effect. But progress in another life will be a greater freedom from this tyranny of the past.[1] We shall begin afresh, but it will be we ourselves that begin. All status will be swept away like cobwebs. We shall love Shakespeare for himself, not for his reputation, and we shall come much nearer to loving God also for Himself and not for His reputation.

We all have some fear of the strangeness of a future state into which we shall come like new boys to school. Certainly we may feel naked there because we shall have lost all status, we shall be free of our past both ways, from the comfort and from the discomfort of it. So Mr. Roosevelt will not be asked to make a speech there; but neither will he be caricatured in comic weeklies. It will no doubt be hard for all of us at first to do without the comfort of our past; but we shall soon find it bracing. We may wish to fall back upon our own past achievements out of the new life of everlasting fresh achievement and activity. When we have done something well we may wish to step back and look at it, instead of going on at once to do something else. But the others will be doing well too and not talking about it; and we shall soon find that we are happier than we had ever thought possible in admiring what they do. There will be a perpetual current of all things drawing us into fellowship with a force that may be painful to us at first; and those who have grown part of the current will have forgotten utterly the dividing habits of this

[1] I need hardly say that by freedom from the past here I do not mean loss of memory.

life so that they will gently discourage us from talking about ourselves. There will be none of those silent treaties of egotism by which some men band together to despise others; and, if we at first make ill-natured jokes, no one will see the point of them; as a child does not see the point of a dirty story. All that may even seem a little insipid to us at first, as fruit is insipid to an East End child fed on liquorice and whelks; but in time we shall learn to relish the celestial fruit, and raise ourselves to the capacity of enjoying the new life.

But what will happen to the people who seem here entirely disgusting—to the wicked? The difficulty is that if they are at all the same as in this life, they will not like the new life. Even the confirmed club bore will not like it unless he can find other bores to talk to; in which case we shall begin to have the same old trouble all over again. It may be possible for the wicked and the bores and the bad artists to band together and make this new world for themselves, and partly for others, like the old one. But all these people live among their own phantoms here, and these they will have left behind. There may be a very small residuum of reality left to them when all the phantasmal part is gone, but this residuum will grow. They will be weaker than the good, they will not have the perverted power they often have here, and they will have to depend on the good and on the fulness of their life. I think they will be like convalescents after a long illness, very frail and timid and pathetic, looking on at the happy sports of the healthy; and they will desire gradually to share in these sports. They, too, will be drawn into the current; and life will come to them from their contact with it. All kinds of long-forgotten memories will quicken in their minds, and with these will return to them the sense of reality which in this world they had lost among their own phantoms. There are people who

have no sense of reality at all except in their memories of childhood. All that they do and think and feel now seems to them merely provisional. It is all a means to something else. They pass through life, in fact, as if they were in the waiting-room at Clapham Junction; and on the faces of the vicious, one always seems to see a provisional look, as if they lived among makeshifts, as indeed they do. In the future life they will not be able to stay themselves with makeshifts. They will be back like children among realities, among the things that are worth doing for their own sake, and they will slowly nerve themselves up to realities and lose all that false shame, which in this world persuaded them that realities were childish and beneath the attention of men of the world.

Here they have believed nothing; there they will learn to believe. The process may be painful at first; one may call it Purgatory, but the word has an error latent in it. For it is not purging that we shall need, but enriching. In the very word Purgatory there is already a perversion of what we really mean by it, a perversion caused by our dislike of one another. It seems to us that other men need to be purged of all that we dislike in them, but if we think of ourselves we know quite well that what we need is to be enriched. Purging would not make us fit for Heaven, there would not be enough of us left for it when we were purged. We shall be purged enough by leaving this world and its phantoms behind us; but we shall be weak and empty after the process. In some cases that thread of self connecting this life with another will be very thin. There will be little reality to remember from the past when all the phantoms are forgotten, but in that small residuum of reality will be the faint beginnings of the future life. Whatever we have known of reality here will help us to recognise reality there. Whatever we have really loved here will be there to be loved again, to be recognised like the sound of bells from an old city

church, like the swinging open of gates, like the sunrise over the mountains, like all those things that are eternal to us, that seem to call us into that place when no more time shall be "but steadfast rest of all things firmly stayed upon the pillars of eternity."

For what is the reality of ourselves to ourselves? Not that part of us which is absorbed in the struggle for life; that is merely the routine self, the mechanical part of us. The real self is that which rises in the very process of the struggle for life to absolute values. One real self is aware of another, is aware of itself, only in love. A great part of our relations with each other is merely mechanical, a matter of business, as we say; and we wear business masks to each other, hiding our reality. There are some who wear these masks always to others and even to themselves. They have subdued themselves to the conception of a business universe; they despair of reality altogether; they have forgotten their own absolute values. Their relation with God Himself, if they had one, would be merely a business relation.

What is the artist except a man who does reveal the real part of himself, not to individual men in some personal intercourse, but to all the world through his art? In that he is aware of his real self through love, he does rise to absolute values. But art, prophetic of Heaven as it is, is not enough, because it is not a personal intercourse between man and man. Heaven would be the fusion of the artist and the saint, the real, not the conventional saint, who is hero and lover and poet in one; it would be absolute values mastering all conduct and turning it into art, making it as beautiful as music. In Heaven conduct would be music. But there is not enough material in us, not enough even in the artist or the lover, to make this music. We are not real enough to make it with each other; the artist himself has to make it for an ideal audience; he cannot speak to the man in the street as he speaks to an imagined world in

his art. He has to suppose saints and angels listening to him before he can begin. Only at rare moments are two human beings at one with each other in their sense of absolute values and then they have a glimpse of Heaven; but it passes because they cannot sustain the moment; they become unreal to each other and to themselves. Heaven would be a universal and everlasting fellowship in the enjoyment of absolute values, a concert of all minds, of all thoughts, and all actions, like that concert of the Cherubim and Seraphim which Milton himself can only express for us in terms of music. He says trumpets and harps; but he means speech and thought and action all become music. He must impoverish the content of Heaven so that he may represent it at all; and that is a proof how far too poor we all are now for the life of Heaven. There is not in us yet soul enough for a life free from the struggle for life. We are pained by the very desire for a love and a fellowship not forced on us by that struggle. There is a warmth in the desires of the flesh without which we should seem to ourselves cold nothings. Our very values seem to be far away from us when we try to obey them for no reason except that they are our values. And yet we know that all our reality is in those values; and our worst sorrow in life is the knowledge that they are not quite real.

> Lord, it is my chief complaint
> That my love is weak and faint.

That is the chief complaint of all men, if only they knew it. Their cry is, not to be purged, but to be enriched.

And yet evil does exist; and in our myths of Hell and Purgatory we insist that it exists, that it is positive, a hard fact in the very nature of man and not imposed on him by circumstances. Man does really will evil if he wills anything; and this we know from our experience of ourselves. Therefore man needs to be purged

of evil; and the common notion is that he must be purged of it by punishment. The myths of Hell and Purgatory are not all an expression of our dislike for each other, of our bad temper. They are an insistence on the fact that evil does exist, and that we cannot rid ourselves of it by a mechanical process of salvation. The notion that all men will necessarily be saved is repulsive to us, not merely because there are some men whom we do not wish to be saved, but because it makes life and the universe unreal to us. It makes evil an illusion imposed on us by God; and, if we believe in God at all, we do not believe that He plays tricks with us.

Further, it is the essence of reality for us that it is uncertain. The future is really the future, the unknown; and our values depend on the fact of this uncertainty. If we were sure of an escape from all evil we should lose our values; the future, no longer a real future, would become a mechanical process, and the good would fade out of it with the evil. So in all myths about our relation with God it is implied that God Himself is not certain of our fate. There is more joy in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth than over ninety-and-nine just men. There could not be that joy if there were foreknowledge; it would not be a real joy but a mere ritual of welcome. And if Heaven is real to us it is not a mere ritual, a perfect theatrical performance of the same happiness for a million and one nights, but a life utterly spontaneous and improvised, a life free of servitude to the past or calculation about the future, free of looking before and after. And that is what we mean by eternity, an everlasting *now*, such as we attain to sometimes when we hear great music, a *now* in which there is succession but not that sense of duration that comes of weariness and anxiety.

But here we are cut off from this freedom by evil in us and outside us. This evil exists and yet we protest continually against its existence. In fact evil

is to us that which is unreal and yet exists. We never consent to it in theory, even when we do evil ourselves in practice. Evil is unreal and yet we are evil. That can only be because we are unreal; but all the while there is a reality in us that rebels against this unreality. If I have been in a rage, I say, when I emerge from it, that it was not really I who was in a rage. Yet the rage existed; and I consented to its existence. So, in the case of all sin, the sin exists and the sinner consents to it, is for the moment subdued to its unreality. And it continues to exist in its consequences after he has withdrawn his consent; that is why we are convinced of the existence of evil in spite of its unreality. It is a tyranny of the past over the present and of the present over the future; and Heaven is to us an escape from this tyranny into the everlasting now.

But it is an escape that we must win for ourselves and not attain to by a mechanical process, such as death. It is we ourselves that must become completely real by an effort of our own; and yet, as we know in this life, we become real only by being aware of a reality not ourselves. That reality exists and passionately desires us to be aware of it; it appeals to us constantly, it pleads with us, in all righteousness, in all truth, in all beauty. From it, if we will consent to open ourselves to it, we get a strength that is not our own. It does not punish us; we punish ourselves by ignoring it; and, what is worse, we punish each other and are cut off from each other, and become alone with ourselves and the sinful unreality of ourselves. The notion that God punishes us, which taints our myths of Purgatory and Hell with our own cruelty, is the result of a failure to conceive of God. All real punishment is self-punishment; it is the real in us rebelling against the unreal, and yet a slave to it. But, if God is real, He is deliverance from the unreal, as the sun is deliverance from darkness; and this real causes us pain only because we refuse the deliverance, refuse the love of

God. So there is no punishment from God for us either in this world or in another.

But, if in that other life God is more instant to us, more plainly revealed in a more piercing righteousness, truth, and beauty, it may be that we shall suffer a sharper pain than here from our failure to rise to our opportunity. Beauty often makes us sad here, because we are ourselves inadequate to it. There our inadequacy may make the far greater beauty almost intolerable to us. We shall have lost all our comfortable unrealities, our sense of status, our vulgarities, our formulae, and our hostile generalisations; we shall have no one to encourage us in our nonsense; and we shall be face to face, all naked and bare as we are, with that which here we call the beatific vision. We shall know that it is the beatific vision; and yet it will hurt us with our own inadequacy to experience it. That is what the myth of Jupiter and Semele means. We are not equal to the contemplation of sublimity, for here we have consented to admire an unreal sublime as if it were real. Here we are always tainting our ideas of beauty with our own egotism. We prefer Solomon in all his glory to the lilies of the field, because we should like to be Solomons ourselves. Only through the lilies of the field could we prepare ourselves for the beatific vision. Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth; blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.

But this sublimity of the beatific vision is not a cold sublimity, as we often suppose; it is not a sublimity emptied of all content or absorbed in the enjoyment of itself. There is desire in it calling to our desire, the love of God calling to the love of man; and it is the urgency of the call that will pain us—

> Lord, it is my chief complaint
> That my love is weak and faint.

To fail in the answer to this ineffable appeal, to baffle

the desire of God with the faintness of our own desire, that will be the pain of Heaven. Nor shall we know, nor will God know, whether we shall ever be able to satisfy His desire with our own. But at least this pain of ours will be real, as his desire is real. It will be real like the sorrow of a great piece of music, not unreal like the routine of this life to which we subdue ourselves even while we rebel against it. It will be real like the Crucifixion, which continues for ever and must continue, until man has risen to an equality with God; but that time is hidden in the darkness of the future, for it rests with man himself whether he shall so rise. But all the beauty and glory of the universe is in the desire of God for man to be equal with Himself, and in the answering desire of man. And that also is the beauty and glory of heaven, more intense than on earth because there man is closer to God.

VII

THE GOOD & EVIL IN SPIRITUALISM

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"PRO CHRISTO ET ECCLESIA"
(LILY DOUGALL)

AUTHOR OF
"CHRISTUS FUTURUS," "VOLUNTAS DEI,"
"THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF HEALTH," ETC.
ALSO OF
"BEGGARS ALL," "THE ZEITGEIST," "THE MORMON PROPHET," ETC.

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Third objection: the dream consciousness of the medium vitiates the telepathic message.
  (*a*) Dream life dramatic.
  (*b*) Medium's "control," probably a personality of dream life.
  (*c*) Air castles.
Fourth objection: clairvoyance is a possible source of knowledge.
  (*a*) Dowser's second sight.
  (*b*) Hypnotic second sight.
  (*c*) The Willett Scrip—the "Ear of Dionysius."
  (*d*) The photograph incident in *Raymond*.
Fifth objection: messages are of flippant type.
  (*a*) Sir W. R. Barrett's "tie-pin case."
  (*b*) The "Ear of Dionysius."
Sixth objection: the difficulties in believing in verbal inspiration.
  (*a*) If God's revelation were not also man's discovery man's mental powers would not be educed.

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(*b*) History shows that spirits from the other worlds have not imparted "ready-made" knowledge to man. "Revelations" of mystics and seers are not in advance of their time.
(*c*) The highest prophetic writings show inference from judgment of ascertained fact.

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VII

THE GOOD AND EVIL IN SPIRITUALISM

Spiritualism and Psychical Research

Most of us dislike anything that may be called occult. The temperament of the average Anglo-Saxon is by nature unfortunately not characterised by scientific patience, and very many are too apt to think that a scientific temper consists in cutting the Gordian knot of some difficult question depending on evidence with the sword of preconceived, anti-superstitious opinion. The expressions, "I believe," "I am profoundly convinced," "Every sane man believes," or "No sane man believes," are constantly used among us as a means of shirking the discomfort of suspended judgment about matters not yet adequately investigated. Touching all that field of thought and emotion commonly called "superstition" this attitude of mind has a certain working value, because it is sometimes exercised in genuine mistake for something true to the best in man and truly scientific. For example, if the average Anglo-Saxon were to say about spiritualistic phenomena, "I am quite sure that at the heart of the universe lie order and reason and health—that God is the God of order and reason and health in all human affairs—and therefore I can, with a light heart, leave the investigation of alleged spiritualistic phenomena to expert scientists; I am quite certain that whatever turns out to be true will also prove useful to man and honouring to God," he

would really say what in intention lies behind much futile asseveration of scorn and unbelief.

It is important to distinguish clearly between scientific investigations such as those undertaken by the Society for Psychical Research (which, as regards attempted communication with the dead, is carried on by mediumistic methods) and the religious or quasi-religious movement which goes by the name of Spiritualism in England and America and of Spiritism on the Continent. This distinction must be kept in mind, and with it one or two points which bear upon the literature of the subject. (*a*) It does not follow, because a man or woman has won a reputation in some department of science—say chemistry or electricity—that their investigation of occult matters will be scientific. Many people keep their science, just as many others keep their religion, in water-tight compartments. When this infirmity of great minds is grasped we shall no longer be confused by the fact that Professor This, who has won real distinction in some special department of science, denies the possibility of communicating with the spirits of the dead, and Professor That, equally distinguished, daily obtains such communications. (*b*) Another point to be remembered is that because a man, even a scientific man, belongs to the S.P.R. it does not follow that he works with the temper and caution which have characterised the official work of the Society. (*c*) Yet a further point is that, although certain prominent men who profess Spiritualism in the religious sense are also members of the S.P.R., that is no reason why we should confuse Spiritualism with the official work of this Society.

There are very few who have ever taken the trouble to read even an article giving an authentic *résumé* of conclusions arrived at by reliable people who have for years followed the investigations of the Society for Psychical Research. As a matter of fact, this Society,

which numbers among its members many illustrious names, has not seen its way to put forth as yet any conclusion with regard to the alleged phenomena of Spiritualism further than the following : it has proved many mediums to be fraudulent, but in cases where all suspicion of fraud has been eliminated by the most careful observation, the most serious members of the Society admit that there is evidence, *either* of non-sensuous—*i.e.* telepathic—communications between the minds of living people to a degree not commonly admitted, *or* of direction by some discarnate spirit. I believe that it is foolish to ignore or discard the evidence. In face of it it is futile to say one day that we do not believe in communication with discarnate spirits, and the next day that we do not believe in what is called "telepathy"; the results of the scientific investigations of the S.P.R. are such that to disbelieve *both* these alternatives is as unreasonable as to say that we do not believe in any other of the common working hypotheses of life which are accepted only on cumulative evidence.

What is our object in thus doggedly disbelieving that mind may act independently of the body? There is a purpose in it. Usually we want to preserve our friends and our families from contact with what appears to us an unhealthy interest. But if our friends and families sooner or later find that they are faced with inexplicable facts that they cannot disbelieve, they will set aside us and our judgments as valueless. If we show credulity in making negative assertions on insufficient evidence, they will show similar credulity in accepting deleterious superstitions. It is true that superstition inhibits the best activities of the soul by dwarfing the love of truth, but prejudice also dwarfs it. If any well-attested fact is subversive of our traditional beliefs, instead of getting angry or scornful, let us consider it patiently. If it be true we may be quite sure that it has been true from the foundation of the

world. If true, it has been awaiting our discovery, and when further explored and assimilated to all the rest of our knowledge, we shall find that it is something that is part of the warp and woof of our familiar life, just as much a part of all our safe and kindly intercourse with the world of sense as any other part of experience.

In endeavouring to make a dispassionate examination of Spiritualism I am going to take my stand upon what I believe to be proved by the evidence furnished by the S.P.R. There are "mediums" who are honest and entirely convinced that the words they give forth by their various automatisms are inspired by some discarnate spirit. This they believe on the strength of the fact that when their talk or their automatic script or their visions have been analysed, they are found to contain information certainly not consciously acquired through their physical senses.

I propose first to show that the hypothesis of telepathy between the living is the more probable explanation of the super-physical knowledge of these mediums. Afterwards, I hope to show that even though their claims to hold verbal communications with the dead are not substantiated, there may still be an important element of truth in spiritualistic experience.

Telepathy

In small ways we are all quite familiar with telepathy, although we have not called it by that name. Like "Le Bourgeois gentilhomme," who talked prose all his life without knowing it, we shall find that we have been telepathic and ignored it. To begin with, most little children know that "mother" can "understand with half a word" what it would be very difficult to explain to any one else. The trouble or joy in question may have occurred quite away from the mother, yet how quickly she knows all about it from a few incoherent words. When we are grown-up we all know the same

thing to be true between us and our best friends ; indeed, it is this quickness of understanding, this ability to dispense with endless verbal explanations, which makes friendship. Now, if we examine this phenomenon, we know that neither the mother nor the friend could say in so many words, before we speak, what we have to tell them ; but neither can the "medium" do this, unless she throw herself into some abnormal condition in which what is called for convenience "the subconscious mind" works automatically. It is a quite tenable hypothesis that her subconscious mind is, at all times, taking photographs, as it were, of the minds of those with whom she comes in contact. Then the automatic power would appear to constitute merely the developing process applied to the photographs taken, so that they may be described by the "medium" and others. On the hypothesis that the mother or friend knows subconsciously very much of what goes on in the lives of those they love, such knowledge would lie, like an undeveloped photograph, until some demand upon sympathy so far developed it that the conscious mind became able dimly to trace its outline. In other words, a demand on sympathy makes the sympathetic person mediumistic to a degree perfectly healthy and normal, so that the emerging subconscious knowledge meets half-way the halting verbal deliverance of the other who seeks sympathy. The old proverb, "It is love that makes the world go round," may thus be translated into the assertion that without the emotion that causes this sympathetic quickness of understanding, outrunning and transcending speech, human society would not hold together. We have too little, not too much, of such understanding, and the telepathic law lying at the bottom of it may be awaiting discovery by those who investigate spiritualistic phenomena. Such a discovery would add to our knowledge, and might help us to value more truly the fact explained : it would not alter an age-long fact.

There are other well-known social phenomena which may prove explicable also by the power of the human mind to take subconscious photographs of other minds, photographs which sometimes, under stress of emotion or public excitement, seem to start, with outline more or less dim, into consciousness. Among such phenomena may be mentioned the spread of rumour, which proverbially flies in front of any messenger; the corporate manias which from time to time affect societies, and were just as common before the existence of daily newspapers as they are now; the power of panic to affect those having no knowledge of the cause of danger; and other more common and well-attested social facts.

Another fact germane to our hypothesis is the mental ascendancy gained over an hypnotic subject by the man who habitually hypnotises him. This ascendancy, although absurdly and deplorably exaggerated in fiction and journalism, has extended in some well-authenticated cases to cover absent suggestion, *i.e.* the suggestion that passes from one to another without physical presence or communication. In such cases we get, first, the susceptibility of the subject to oral suggestion during hypnotic sleep; second, a proneness to the mental suggestion of the hypnotiser when present during that sleep; third, the mental suggestion operating in absence.[1]

Thus we see that the telepathy with which we propose to explain the super-sensuous knowledge of mediums is allied to phenomena with which we are all familiar. Reverting to the stages in hypnotic suggestion just noted, it is the second that is commonly reproduced in a private séance with a medium, when the medium, by some process of self-hypnotism, goes into sleep or trance, and so passes under the influence of the "sitter's" mind as to interpret with variations what he or she already knows. The investigators of the S.P.R. all admit that when a medium in trance-

[1] See *Studies in Psychical Research*, by F. Podmore, pp. 219 ff.

speech or automatic writing reproduces in any form any idea in the mind of some one present during the trance, there is no evidence of anything but telepathic communication between the two. The automatic condition is supposed to make the mind mediumistic or peculiarly susceptible to telepathic impressions.

The following story, taken in connection with such facts of common life as are noted in the previous pages, seems to suggest that the automatic condition is peculiar, not in receiving telepathic impressions, but in developing them in consciousness. I believe the story, told me recently by a friend, to be true as I give it, although when told to me it appeared more eerie and quite as incredible as any other story of ghostly happenings. My friend, whom we will call "Miss A," received a visit from an acquaintance we will call "Mrs. B." The mind of Miss A was at the time absorbed by the details of some striking events which had lately occurred in her own circle, but she did not mention these events to Mrs. B, who was not an intimate friend, and was not personally concerned in them. In the course of conversation Mrs. B said she was on her way to keep an appointment with a visualising medium. Asked why she made such appointments, she replied that this medium had the power to see as in a vision the most important factors of her life, and in that way to give her wise advice as to how to act in the present and immediate future. Mrs. B took her leave, but in a short time unexpectedly called again on her way home, to tell Miss A that her visit to the medium this time had been disappointing and useless. The medium had had and described a series of visions, but nothing in them was recognised by Mrs. B, and neither she nor the medium could make any sense out of the visions. Out of politeness, Miss A enquired their nature, and was amazed when Mrs. B's recital set forth with considerable detail the events which had absorbed her own mind during Mrs. B's visit before she

went on to the séance. One curious detail was added: the visions had been ushered into the medium's plane of vision by the figure of a Chinaman in fine apparel. Now, the odd thing was, that that very morning Miss A had happened to pass the Chinese Embassy in London, and had seen two gorgeously attired Chinamen coming down the steps, whose dress had greatly pleased her artistic sense. These Chinamen had, of course, nothing to do with the other events over which in those days her mind was brooding.

We may describe what happened—figuratively—by saying that Mrs. B's subconscious mind had carried away what might be called a photograph of Miss A's thought as they sat together, a photograph that did not emerge into Mrs. B's consciousness, but was perceived, developed, and described by the medium's subconscious mind. The other possible hypothesis—that the medium visualised Miss A's thought direct—would seem to deny any limit at all to the medium's power of thought-reading, as in this case he had never seen or heard of Miss A.

In the light of this incident I should like to analyse the one given in Mr. J. Arthur Hill's *Psychical Investigation* and headed "A Crucial Test." Mr. Hill says (p. 172): "I give, below, a recent case in which the theory of telepathy from the sitter is excluded." He then describes how his medium, Mr. A. Wilkinson, had seen a woman called Ruth Robertshaw.

"*A. W.* Did you know somebody called Ruth Robertshaw?

"*J. A. H.* I don't remember anybody at the moment.

"*A. W.* . . . I saw her perfectly. A crescent-shaped light was over her head, and her face was illumined. She would be inclined to be rather pious in her way (quite meaningless to me). This woman Ruth is no relation to you, I think. There was a gentleman belonging to her, called Jacob. I think he would be her husband. Whoever he was, he was older

than her. He would be seventy-three. She would be about ten years younger. . . .

"All this conveyed nothing to me. But previous experience (see pp. 167–169, etc.) warned me not to dismiss it hastily, and it occurred to me to write to the last visitor I had had, three days before—a Miss North—in case the two people belonged to her, though I thought it unlikely, for I knew of no Robertshaws among her relatives or friends.

"Her reply was: 'You make me feel creepy. Ruth Robertshaw was my father's cousin—one of the sweetest women that ever lived. She was a beautiful old lady when I knew her, and *good*. Jacob was her husband. The ages given are just about right.'"

Now the likeness between this case and the previous case of "Miss A" and "Mrs. B" is obvious. They differ in that three days elapsed between Miss North's visit to Mr. Hill and his visit to the medium, while, too, we have no proof that during her visit to Mr. Hill Miss North's mind was actively occupied with the Robertshaws. Otherwise the likeness between the two cases is striking. Even apart from the Chinaman, we must rule out any interference of a discarnate spirit in the case of "Miss A" and "Mrs. B"; and the addition of the living Chinaman makes such an hypothesis absurd. So we must disagree with Mr. Hill when he says (p. 173): "To me (this case of Miss North) is conclusive of something beyond either normal knowledge on the medium's part or *telepathy from me*; and indeed I can find no satisfactory explanation except the spiritistic one. Apparently those on the other side are aware of the movements of those in whom they are still interested down here, and are in some sense 'with' them, even to the extent of being perceivable by a sensitive through an after-influence left some days before." Mr. Hill suggests, as the only mind-reading theory that might be advanced, that this "after-influence" established a *rapport* by which

Wilkinson was able to read the mind of the distant and unknown Miss North, and dismisses the idea as credulous and superstitious. He does not consider the explanation my story suggests. It will be noted, however, that he attributes to Miss North the knowledge which the medium, Wilkinson, communicated, and he regards the spirits as perceivable by the medium because they were "with" Miss North some days before and left an "after-influence." In the case of "Miss A" and "Mrs. B" the after-influence perceived by the medium, though left some hours before, was not a spirit, but obviously a telepathic impression, and the persistence of such an impression for three days in Mr. Hill's mind is not *a priori* impossible. The difference of three hours in the one case and three days in the other is hardly a proof that a discarnate spirit was present in the latter case and not in the former.[1]

Apart from my story, there is abundant evidence that certain honest mediums have shown an extraordinary knowledge, not only of events present to the minds of enquirers who went to them in a receptive mood, but of events that such enquirers were convinced they did not know, but which people connected with them did know. An instance of this occurs in *Raymond* (pp. 147-148), where the medium gives the name "Norman" as a nickname given to Raymond by his brothers, a nickname which the sitters at the séance did not know.

Objections to the Spiritualist Hypothesis

We may now proceed to state the principal objections to the belief in detailed verbal communication from discarnate spirits which Spiritualism maintains.

[1] It occurs to me as possible that the incident may throw light on the case of the photograph in Sir Oliver Lodge's *Raymond*, discussed below, pp. 268-269.

(1) *Telepathy usually an Adequate Explanation*

The first objection has been already indicated. It is that as yet we do not know the limits of the subconscious mind's power of access to other minds on earth, nor the length of time an impression thus made may persist before it is brought into consciousness. Because thought-transference or telepathy certainly accounts for so large a part of so-called "communications," we are forbidden by the Law of Parsimony to seek another cause till we are assured that this or some other known cause will not serve. While our knowledge of the limits and working of telepathy remains imperfect, this is not a final objection, but it has much greater weight than convinced spiritualists will commonly allow. They urge that the explanation of messages as obtained by telepathy from the living is often much more complex or roundabout than the spiritualist explanation, and this argument sounds plausible. But science has often found that what seems the simpler explanation is not the true one. Many people used to be indignant at the suggestion that the common cold is caused by an infectious microbe. They felt chill; they developed a cold; why drag in the complicated theory of the catarrhal microbe? Yet the more complex theory was the true one. And in every department of research science has had to replace simple and obvious explanations which were false by the more complex truth.

In our present problem we must remember that telepathy from the living is proved to be the source of part of the information imparted by mediums. No one who has studied the subject will deny this. I once had an interview with a fortune-telling gipsy whose ways were obviously mediumistic. She told me that I would receive a letter in the first week of the new year containing a hundred pounds. I was much impressed, because I expected this amount at exactly that

time, believing the money was then due from my publisher. When the time came I discovered that the publisher did not pay till six months after the year's accounts were rendered, and that then ten pounds of it would go to the literary agent! The gipsy's information was obviously a reflection of my own mind at the time we met.

A notable instance of the same sort is given in an account by Mrs. Henry Sidgwick of a case in which Mrs. Piper gave false information, part of which was certainly derived from the minds of the enquirers concerned. Briefly the facts are as follows. Conner, a young citizen of the United States, went to the city of Mexico to work as electrician in a theatre, but was soon taken ill with typhoid fever, removed to the American hospital, and died in the spring of 1895. An official account of his death and burial was sent by the American Consul-General to his father in Vermont. A few months later his father had a vivid dream in which his son appeared to him and said he was not dead, but alive, and held a captive in Mexico. Conner's friends consulted Mrs. Piper, who in trance confirmed the dream. Her controls claimed that he had been taken from the hospital at night by the "South road" and was being held for ransom or some other dark purpose, and that the body of another patient who had died was dressed in his clothes and buried as Conner. Thus fortified in their suspicions Conner's friends sent a Mr. Dodge, who knew him well, to Mexico to look for him. Ultimately he got leave to exhume the body, now buried about a year, and "was pretty well convinced at the time that" it was that of Conner. Mrs. Piper's controls, on the contrary, continued to assert that he had been taken along a South road—to a country house, said one; to Tuxedo, said another. Mrs. Piper was ill for a good part of 1896, but in October of that year Mr. Dodge had another sitting with her, in which her control gave a lurid account

of Conner's condition at or near Puebla in some sort of lunatic asylum. The friends again started in search, directed by telegraphed instructions given in trance by Mrs. Piper. The directions as to his whereabouts were precise, but they were always incorrect or inadequate, and the seekers returned puzzled and disappointed. Ultimately the gentleman who published the story satisfied himself that the descriptions were misleading, that Conner could not have been confined as described without the knowledge of the authorities, and, moreover, that there could have been no motive for kidnapping him. He also found the nurse who had actually seen Conner die, and, in fine, set the whole question at rest. As to Mrs. Piper, it would seem that "the enquiry set her subliminal imagination to work." Mrs. Sidgwick says, "She got some things right according to the ideas of Mr. Dodge —perhaps in part by thought-transference from him, and, once started on the wrong line, embroidered on it further." One incident at least seems a remarkable instance of telepathy from the sitter. A certain landscape view, as seen by Mr. Dodge at Puebla, was in his presence vividly and accurately described by the controls.[1]

It appears to me that in such a case it is probable that what Mrs. Sidgwick calls Mrs. Piper's "subliminal imagination" gave a dramatic representation of the uneasy fears of Conner's friends. From visits of my own to mediums and from what others tell me, I have formed the opinion that all that is commonly obtained from a professional medium is, at best, a dramatic reproduction of what is, consciously or unconsciously, in the sitter's mind. By a dramatic reproduction I mean that the medium sees the knowledge imaginatively as in a dream; his or her statement comes in an unexpected form, and therefore *seems* fresh. I once asked a medium for my mother's name, and was

[1] *S.P.R. Journal*, vol. xvii. No. cccxxxiii.

told that the name, which she gave correctly, was "written in fire across the table"!

The source of the knowledge is telepathic; the form is given by the dream imagery discussed later. That some telepathic impression from the enquirer is the most frequent source of the medium's knowledge is recognised by many investigators of the S.P.R. Sir O. Lodge says: "The possibility of what may be called normal telepathy, or unconscious mind-reading from survivors, raises hesitation about accepting messages as irrefragable evidence of persistent personal existence."[1]

Even accepting as something seriously to be reckoned with, the evidence offered by the S.P.R., we clearly need much more investigation before we can be assured that mediums possess any spiritistic source of information. But the belief of the ordinary spiritualist runs far in advance of anything for which the annals of the S.P.R. offer evidence. A notable development of spiritualism is the publication of whole books purporting to have been dictated by discarnate spirits to mediums who took down these dictations in automatic script. By "automatic script" is meant writing that is done when the mind of the writer is either entranced or diverted from the operation of writing; the writer does not look at the paper and professes to be ignorant of what is written.

(2) *Automatic Writing*

The second objection concerns such "inspired" writing of the spiritualists, much of which is now published and has great currency. While it is impossible to assert of any one passage from published automatic writings that it certainly represents the earthly environment of the medium, and not the mind of any discarnate spirit, it is worthy of note that when we get whole books of automatic writing supposed to be inspired by some individual from the next life, we find that on the whole

[1] *Raymond*, p. 346.

we have nothing that does not correspond with the intellectual, moral, and religious environment of the medium. Beside the automatic writings reported by the S.P.R. I may refer to three such books of whose origin I happen to know something. One was written in the house of a personal friend; one by a lady medium well known to some of my friends; the third by different members of one family all quite well known in a neighbourhood where I often visit. I have reason to believe that each of these three books is an honest effort to give to the world what is honestly believed to be a revelation from another world, verbally inspired by a discarnate spirit. What is most striking about all these collections is that they reflect the general thought of the circles and households from which they emanate. What might be called the general telepathic environment of the medium is exactly reflected, and nothing more.

If "mediumship" means, as I believe it does, a greater awareness than the ordinary person possesses of telepathic environment, a greater quiescence of the individual judgment and the conscious reason, such faithful reflection of mental environment would be just what we should expect. I find no individual style or character in these books. They ripple on with serious but monotonous and insipid platitudes on a level with surrounding thought and belief.

Such physical and mental automatisms as writing or speaking or screaming or dancing are well known to medical science. They can be self-induced in various ways. A child, after its grief is appeased, will sometimes go on sobbing, unable to stop. The laughter of a hysteric is analogous. Public speakers, even of strong character, sometimes find themselves unable to bring a speech to a desired end: sentences which add nothing to the force of what they have said keep rising in their mind and rolling from their lips because mind and voice, habituated to the exercise, work automatically. Men who are forced to think on certain subjects by

day often find that they cannot help thinking of them by night; their conscious thoughts go on and on, but produce no conclusion. Automatic speech or writing, so far as it is physical, may be precisely the same sort of affection in kind, although it is a further development of the power of mechanical habit. So far as it is mental it may be referred to the dream consciousness discussed later on. Responsible members of the S.P.R. are generally of the opinion that the fact that speech or writing is automatic is not in itself any evidence that it has any source beyond the subconscious mind of the medium. Such automatic writings as the S.P.R. has offered for public criticism have been interesting only because they appeared to contain information which the medium could not have obtained in any ordinary way, and which was of such a nature that it could be verified. As to descriptions of the next life, what spiritualists tell us is of no importance if it rests on no other evidence than that some medium has produced it in automatic speech or writing and attributed it to the dictation or revelation of some discarnate spirit.

(3) *Dream-consciousness of the Medium*

This brings us to the third objection to the claim of spiritualists to know the conditions of the next life: even if a discarnate spirit were striving to communicate through a medium's automatic speech or script, the medium's dream-consciousness would always, potentially at least, vitiate the message. Thus we must consider the working of the dream-consciousness of human beings. It has often been proved that dramatic dreams, which to the dreamer appear of long duration, have taken place in a few moments of time and have been suggested by some simple external circumstance, such as a knock at the door, a street cry, or the touch of something near the dreamer. This proves the facility with which the human imagination, when unbridled by conscious

reason, groups scenes and narratives round some casual sensuous suggestion, a facility well known to every candid student of dreams. The scenes and narratives will depend upon the temperament, environment, and experience of the dreamer, but the imaginative power to produce them when in a dreaming state is common. The same sort of power is seen in those illusions which in mist or half light frequently startle waking people. Some half-seen object by its outline or colour suggests something else, and straightway the percipient sees the thing suggested in all its detail, although the detail can be proved afterwards not to be there. I once stood for a full minute with a friend gazing at a wonderful apparition of Mary Queen of Scots in the exact costume of her best-known portrait. She was kneeling by a chair in a darkened room, her hand and face uplifted apparently in prayer. We both saw the same person—the attitude, the costume—in the light from the door we had opened ; but when we recovered from our astonishment and went forward to investigate, we found only a black velvet gown with lace frills, which a maid had thrown carelessly on the chair. The real outline suggested, but only suggested, what we saw. The imaginative element in all perception, heightened in such a case as this, is probably the same that runs riot in our dreams. Only yesterday I was told that a friend had had a long and vivid dream of a hound that sprang on his bed and grabbed at his stomach : he awoke to feel an acute pain in that organ, caused by a fit of indigestion. When I was a child having lessons in English composition my class was given the task of writing an essay upon the herring. I idled my time and went to sleep with the heavy consciousness that I had no paper ready to give in the next day. I dreamed of a parliament of herrings under the sea, in which, with dramatic ceremony, a red herring was elected their king. Hastily transcribing my dream, I gave in a paper, and later was amazed to

receive an ill-deserved prize for imaginative composition. Had I gone to sleep with my mind full of the death of some friend and heavy with perplexed questions concerning the after-life, I should have been quite as likely to have had a coherent dream of the after-life. If, on repeating such a dream to parents or friends, it had been much discussed I might easily have had more dreams on the same subject, none of them less vivid and coherent or more authentic than that of the herring parliament.

To the facility of the sleeping dream we must add the facility of the day-dreaming imagination. Weaving stories of our own pleasurable expectations or "building castles in Spain" is a very common source of self-entertainment. With many young people of the dreamy temperament it becomes a sort of second life, and the dream-self becomes a second personality. Some have several different dream-selves to suit different moods, and each moves among a different set of characters. As long as the day-dreamer remains sane and wide awake, the difference between these dreams and reality is not blurred; but such dreams attest the facility of dramatic imagination in a large class of young people, and in some throughout life. Further, there are times, on going to sleep and on awaking, when most day-dreamers confuse the habitual dream-story with reality. It is in bed, on the verge of sleep, that most children derive the liveliest pleasure from their "castles in Spain," because then they seem to be in reality the dream-self and to mix with the dream surroundings.

It has been pointed out in a previous Essay[1] that Reverie or day-dreaming is only the first of a series of self-induced hypnoidal states which fade off insensibly into one another until they culminate, in what looks like a deep sleep, in the hypnotic trance —of which the trance of the medium seems to be a variety. We cannot, however, realise too clearly that

[1] Pp. 35 ff.

hypnoidal states, or hypnotic trances, are not—though the name suggests it—states of sleepiness or sleep. They are rather states of heightened attention, in which the mind is withdrawn from voluntary trains of thought and (at certain stages) from sensation. The consciousness thus liberated is intensely awake, and is aware of impressions and alive to conclusions which at other times would be unnoticed. Things that we know, but do not know we know, may arise in it. Vivid imaginations started by chance suggestions may pass before it. Thoughts from other minds may intrude upon it—indeed susceptibility to "suggestion" is a marked characteristic of the hypnoidal state. When the state has been induced by another person, that person can by suggestion largely determine the content of the mind of the subject. But when the hypnoidal state is self-induced, the general tenor of that content will probably be governed by the real, although perhaps not conscious, tenor of desire and purpose in the life of the subject. Hence where, as in the case of the automatic writer an elementary, or in the case of the medium in trance an advanced, stage of the hypnoidal state is self-induced with the express purpose of getting into communication with a person in the spirit-world, the subject is likely to be peculiarly sensitive to telepathic suggestion from other minds, or to be dominated by an uprush of ideas latent in his own mind, concerning some person in the spirit-world.

In the light of these considerations we may examine the conception of the "control" developed by mediums. Sir O. Lodge says: "The kind of medium chiefly dealt with in this book is one who, by waiting quietly, goes more or less into a trance, and is then subject to what is called 'control' . . . which certainly *is* a secondary personality of the medium, whatever that phrase may really signify."[1] It is to the dramatic imagination of the dream-consciousness that I should judge the apparent

[1] *Raymond*, p. 86.

personality and communications of the "control" to be due. But Sir Oliver speaks of the "control" as receiving some, but only some, messages which he thinks are from "the next world," and "transmitting them through the speech or writing of the medium, and with mannerisms belonging either to the medium or to the 'control.' The amount of sophistication varies according to the quality of the medium and to the state of the medium at different times; it must be attributed in the best cases physiologically to the medium, intellectually to the control."[1] It is when the dream padding is coherent that Sir Oliver apparently calls it "sophistication." When speaking of information given by Mrs. Leonard's control, "Feda," as to the nature of the next life, he says that some records are "of a very non-evidential and perhaps ridiculous kind, but I do not feel inclined to suppress them. . . . I should think, myself, that they are of very varying degrees of value, and peculiarly liable to unintentional sophistication by the medium. They cannot be really satisfactory, as we have no means of bringing them to book. The difficulty is that Feda encounters many sitters, and though the majority are just enquirers, taking what comes and saying very little, one or two may be themselves full of theories, and may either intentionally or unconsciously convey them to the control; who may thereafter retail them as actual information, without perhaps being sure whence they are derived."[2]

The passages in the sitting referred to are given by Feda dramatically as spoken by Raymond, or glibly, describing Raymond's experience. "He's been attending lectures at what they call 'halls of learning': you can prepare yourself for the higher spheres while you are living in lower ones. He's on the third, but he's told that even now he could go on to the fourth if he chose; but he says he would rather be learning the laws ap-per-taining to each sphere while he's still living

[1] *Raymond*, p. 87. [2] *Ibid.* pp. 191-192.

on the third. . . . He went into a place on the fifth sphere—a place he takes to be made of alabaster. He's not sure that it really was, but it looked like that. It looked like a kind of temple—a large one. . . . He went in, and he saw that though the building was white, there were many different lights; looked like certain places covered in red, and . . . was blue, and the centre was orange. These were not the crude colours that go by those names, but a softened shade. And he looked to see what they came from. Then he saw that a lot of the windows were extremely large, and the panes in them had glass of these colours." [1]

Before giving these and analogous passages, Sir O. Lodge says: "I am inclined myself to attribute a good deal of this to hypothetical information received by Feda from other sitters; but it seems unfair to suppress it. In accordance with my plan I propose to reproduce it for what it is worth." [2] Sir Oliver does not himself pronounce any final decision as to whether these messages are from the discarnate spirit and therefore veridical, or not. He seems to admit the possibility of their genuineness without sufficiently emphasising the grave dilemma involved. If these long, and—to us—certainly ridiculous accounts of the next life are genuine, it becomes impossible to defend their triviality, and the general triviality of spirit communications, on the ground that it is so difficult to get through coherent messages; yet that is the ground on which the scrappy or trivial nature of such communications is always defended. On the other hand, if these long screeds of Feda's proceed from the medium's dream-consciousness, it must be observed that they come with just the same credentials as any other message from Raymond or other discarnate spirit given by other mediums. If these are false there is no sufficient reason for accepting any spiritualistic description of the next life.

[1] *Raymond*, pp. 263-264. [2] *Ibid.* p. 262.

We have seen that the imaginative faculty appears to work most freely when the subject is in a semi-waking or waking condition, but with the conscious reason entirely diverted or inactive; such a condition is just what we appear to get when mediums obtain their supposed messages from discarnate spirits; it is therefore but reasonable to expect that their dream imagination will work actively on any suggestion given to them when in a semi-sleeping or trance or automatic state. What Sir Oliver Lodge calls "padding" appears to show that such dreams figure in the communications of mediums who are not conscious of any fraudulent intention.

Young people who indulge in ordinary day-dreams are usually surrounded by friends who show no inclination to take interest in such dreams. The dreams are so obviously of the stuff that would wake derision in the bystanders that the dreamer, however prone to this private folly, is never tempted to credulity concerning it. But young people of the same temperament among spiritualists, if they betrayed any sign of being "mediumistic," would find encouragement to believe a certain class of waking or half-waking dreams inspired. The psychological result of such encouragement requires investigation. As an example of the sort of automatic or impressionist script that is accepted and published among spiritualists, I quote from a book which seems popular among them. A mother purports to speak to her children :—

"I told you of my experiences with a band of newly arrived people who were led with me to hear some beautiful music. After that music had ceased, they did not all disperse, but we went on in a little company still further along the spacious valley till we were met by a band of shining ones, who came towards us as on the wings of the wind—so swift and undulating was their motion, and each of these messengers—for such they were—had a bright star on his or her forehead; and

when they met us they advanced to my companions and each of them took one or two by the hand and so drew them away by different paths ; but one of these fair messengers remained with me, and led me apart to a green spot on the banks of one of the bright streams that adds so much to the music and the beauty of this land, and sitting on that sweet-scented bank, this comrade from a higher sphere opened his heart to me, and taught me more of the true wisdom that comes like drops of balm to the thirsting, eager spirit. He told me that other work was awaiting me than that I was now doing ; that it would come gradually ; and he assured me it would not separate me from Earth and the loved ones I had left there, but would greatly add to my powers of helping and serving them."[1]

This is quite evidently just the sort of thing that the habitual day-dreamer can produce "for seven years together, eating and sleeping hours excepted."

(4) *The Possibility of Clairvoyance*

There is another difficulty in accepting as conclusive even some of the most "evidential" of the automatic scripts published by the S.P.R. Those that are nearest to being convincing to my mind are given by Mr. Gerald Balfour in the *Proceedings of the S.P.R.*, vol. xxix. No. lxxiii. They are passages from the script of a medium called Mrs. Willett. The communicators purport to be Dr. A. W. Verrall and Prof. S. H. Butcher, both dead. The evidence consists in the fact that in several sittings given in 1914–15, a number of apparently disconnected classical allusions are furnished —afterwards found to circle round the "ear of Dionysius"—and the sitting is closed with the words, "Enough for this time. . . . A literary association of ideas pointing to the influence of two discarnate minds." The apparently disconnected allusions were finally found

[1] *Messages from the Unseen*, pp. 140-141.

all together in a classical work by an American scholar, a copy of which Dr. Verrall possessed and used when preparing his lectures. The contents of this book were certainly not known to the medium, and were not consciously known to Mrs. Verrall or the other investigators. As there appears to have been no one concerned in the investigation, or connected with the medium, who had in mind the various classical stories involved or was consciously aware of the one historical incident with which they were all connected, it follows that there is little in these scripts that can be attributed merely to thought-transference or to the dramatic dream-consciousness of the medium. The conclusion of Mr. Gerald Balfour and some others is that they were dictated by the discarnate mind of Dr. Verrall; others think that the medium really had the knowledge and had forgotten it. But there is another possible power of the subliminal self which I think needs to be taken into account. It is called "second sight," or "clairvoyance proper," and is the faculty of seeing at a distance or into a closed room, or reading a closed letter or a closed book. The evidence for this power is at present slight, but we cannot ignore the possibility of such an extension of human faculty as a factor in producing this script before we conclude that the evidence proves the operation of discarnate minds. I have personally known cases in which certain people at certain times appeared to obtain a correct impression of letters or books before they were opened. Thus, I have seen a child open a large Bible, apparently at random, and straightway put her finger on a somewhat recondite text that had been asked for, although by any normal method she could only have found it after long search. Any one such case may, of course, be mere coincidence, but there are stories affording apparent evidence of such a faculty, for it is obviously quite as easy to read a closed book or letter as to see water underground or see what is passing in another

town. The operations of "dowsers" seem to support this theory, as also do some of Swedenborg's well-attested experiences.

Other evidence of the same faculty can be found in Myers's *Human Personality*, vol. i. p. 352, appendix 236A; and p. 370, appendix 415A. Vol. vii. of the *Proceedings of the S.P.R.* contains two articles by Mrs. Sidgwick and one by Dr. Alfred Backman, of Kalmar, Sweden, which appear to establish the fact that when the subconscious mind is liberated by the hypnotic trance it evinces some power of seeing what could not be discerned by the agent's physical eyes—*e.g.* seeing into rooms at a distance. This is called "travelling clairvoyance." It appears to be regarded as proved by Sir O. Lodge.[1]

Whether the subconscious minds of educated people can or cannot see into closed books which they do not consciously consult, remains to be proved.

My suggestion as to a possible explanation in the case of the Willett script—if it be true that no one concerned had other means of acquiring this knowledge—is that Mrs. Verrall's subconscious mind, excited by an accidental reference in an early script to the "ear of Dionysius," may have been working upon the subject and obtaining by clairvoyance from Dr. Verrall's books around her, evidence which she was able to transfer—also subconsciously—in a patchy way to the mind of Mrs. Willett. Such a description of the way our mental affairs may be conducted is, I confess, fantastic in the extreme, but the evidence of second sight or travelling clairvoyance given in the articles to which I have referred is also extremely fantastic—one would have said, incredible, and nothing could appear more incredible than the true story which I have told of Miss A and Mrs. B.

Turning again to *Raymond*, we find the most evidential circumstance given is the description of a

[1] Cf. *Hibbert Journal*, April 1917.

photograph of Raymond communicated to Sir Oliver Lodge, who had not seen it. The case is this: On September 27 Lady Lodge was informed by a medium, Peters, that among the portraits she possessed of "this boy" was one where he was in a group of other men, adding, "He is particular that I should tell you this. In one you see his walking-stick." As all officers carry canes and are often photographed in groups, there is so far nothing evidential, but what follows is noteworthy. Lady Lodge at that time had no such photograph and knew of none such; but on November 29 she got a note from a Mrs. Cheves, a stranger to her, but the mother of one of Raymond's friends, offering to send her a group photograph in which her son Raymond appeared, and adding, "I have often thought of you and felt so much for you in your great sorrow." Before the photograph arrived Sir Oliver Lodge consulted another medium, Mrs. Leonard, and in reply to questions got some correct and striking details concerning the photograph. The question remains whether travelling clairvoyance may not have given this information to the mediums.[1]

(5) *Character of Messages*

The fifth objection concerns the character of the messages put forward as coming from spirits of the dead. Moral and religious people are objecting that they are too trivial to be credible. But I do not conceive mere triviality or littleness to be a real objection. To the observant nothing is insignificant; and the characters of the greatest men may be read in their trifling, half-unconscious actions. On earth "God comes to us in the little things."

[1] An alternative explanation of this incident would be that the medium was able to "photograph" impressions telepathically conveyed to Sir Oliver from Mrs. Cheves; the only difference between this and the cases quoted on pp. 250-253 would be that Sir Oliver and Mrs. Cheves had not been in actual personal contact, though they had clearly been thinking about one another in connection with Raymond.

If the next life is continuous with this, we have no need to think of it as of huge, empty spaces in which a few magnificent realities loom dreadful to the naked soul. If God is Creator He is eternally Creator. To create means to manifest thought in form. There, as here, we must know Him in the beauty of His creation. If He is eternal Love, there, as here, life will be in the human family, social, hence interesting ; there, as here,[1] the reign of God will be within blessed souls, and their activities will make its outward manifestations, even in smallest words and actions. Therefore I think the objection of mere triviality cannot hold.

What is really felt, though seldom said, is that all communications are disappointing ; those which cannot be verified are feeble, while those which have the best verification are, for the most part, under the circumstances, flippant. Sir William Barrett, in his book, *On the Threshold of the Unseen*, tells us of a young officer who was killed in France, and who before leaving for the front had been secretly engaged to a girl who was unknown to all his relatives. Shortly after his death a message was spelt out on the ouija board purporting to come from him, merely bidding his mother to give his pearl tie-pin to his fiancée, whose name he supplied. The information was verified, and he was found to have left his effects by will to the lady. What should we think of a young man who, lying wounded in a base hospital after going through the terrible experiences of the war, is able to send one short telegram to his mother, and uses the opportunity merely to arrange the disposal of a tie-pin, in such a way announcing a secret engagement? And is such a message less unfilial and flippant if it come from the other side of death? I cite this case as typical of many messages from missing soldiers that would have seemed impertinent or insane if arriving by telegram from a German

[1] Spatial terms are used without prejudging the question as to the nature of the inter-relation of the two worlds.

prison or a foreign hospital, but are cherished as evidence of survival, though obviously a more appropriate and feeling message could have been just as simply expressed and just as evidential. When the substance of such messages can be verified in fact it is more likely that they result from telepathic impressions received by relatives before the death and only realised afterwards.

The same objection applies to messages which "evidentially" are of a much higher type. Let us take, for instance, the communications published by the S.P.R. under the title "The Ear of Dionysius," referred to above. In this case two learned men of fine character are represented as deciding together in the unseen how to get some evidence of their personal survival to their friends on earth. They had been absent from those friends for some months, and those friends in the meantime had been experiencing the shock and grief of the present war. Surely the circumstances are such that jokes and badinage and literary reminiscences of the lightest type, charming enough if timely, are not expressive of a rational and kindly standard of relative values. It must be impossible to give evidence of personal survival that will admit of scientific proof; only a strong presumption can be created; but there are many incidents in classic lore more appropriate to such an occasion than that chosen, and as suitable to indicate survival. Evidence of this sort appears to many to raise more difficulties than it allays.

(6) *Spiritualism postulates Verbal Inspiration*

The last and greatest objection which I have to urge concerns the whole question of the possibility of verbal inspiration from the unseen world.

If it be urged that communications from friends who have passed into the next world are not of the nature of a revelation or inspiration, but that they would naturally talk to us by words and signs just

as they did upon earth, it may be answered, first, that we cannot possibly take communications from those who have passed into a discarnate state as though they were on the level of our earthly powers and experience. They have a great experience which we have not; presumably they have powers and opportunities of knowledge which we have not. We are therefore not in a position to judge what in their communications is probable and what is not, as we judge the communications of living people. Their words, if they reach us, have a new authority, or at least a new importance; and, unfortunately, to-day the air of large religious circles is rife with notions that are supposed to have been got in this way, notions which do not conduce to wisdom. If we receive from our dead communications concerning the next life, these communications, if true, are certainly revelations concerning that life, and therefore of vital import to us. Further, if we and they be religious we shall naturally believe that, while such revelations are given us through our friends, they are still given us by the grace of God. Thus we cannot blame people who receive even foolish notions as authoritative if they believe them to be communications from the dead. In the second place, the word "inspiration" implies some thought or message which a living person believes himself to receive, not through his senses, but within that sphere in which his super-sensuous nature operates. Methods of mediumistic operation are thus described by Sir O. Lodge :—

"When the method of communication is purely mental or telepathic, we are assured that the communicator 'on the other side' has to select from and utilise those ideas and channels which represent the customary mental scope of the medium. . . . In many such telepathic communications the physical form which the emergent message takes is that of automatic or semi-conscious writing or speech; the

manner of the utterance being fairly normal, but the substance of it appearing not to emanate from the writer's or speaker's own mind: though but very seldom is either the subject-matter or the language of a kind quite beyond the writer's or speaker's normal capabilities. In other cases, when the medium becomes entranced, the demonstration of a communicator's separate intelligence may become stronger and the sophistication less. A still further stage is reached when by special effort what is called *telergy* is employed, *i.e.* when physiological mechanism is more directly utilised without telepathic operation on the mind."[1] Here, then, we see Sir Oliver recognises at least three methods of communication from those in the next life: First, an impression made telepathically on the mind of the medium: Secondly, when the communicator has some share in the control of the semi-conscious thought or speech of the medium, who is entranced: and, Thirdly, when the communicator usurps the medium's vocal chords or the muscles which manipulate the pen. Messages arriving through any of these three methods may quite legitimately be called "inspired," if they are believed to give a true account of the next life they are regarded as a revelation. If, then, we believe that by these methods we obtain messages verbally dictated by departed souls, we have returned to a belief in verbal inspiration, and I wish to submit that all the difficulties with which we are familiar in believing that our Scriptures were thus inspired are to be urged against any belief that our friends in the next world give verbally inspired messages to those who remain in the flesh. This may not be a final objection to all messages from another world, but it is a serious difficulty and must be faced.

Which of us believes that our sacred Scriptures were verbally inspired? If we do not believe it, why not?

There is no need to recall the familiar objections arising out of historical contradictions and inaccuracies

[1] *Raymond*, p. 88.

or the "moral difficulties" of the Old Testament and the like. But it is perhaps worth while to suggest two less obvious but, as it seems to me, even more cogent reasons.

Firstly, if we can discern any purpose at all in the universe it is the educing of life and the latent powers of life by enterprise and discovery. The evolution of mind or soul seems to be an aim of the biological process; it is the going forth to seek food that develops mind. Even in our small reach of biological knowledge and in human history we see that when food for the stomach or for the soul is superimposed, mind remains servile and stunted. It is alone by the enterprise and adventure that engage all his powers that man grows. In him is planted an insatiable desire to know, to admire, to love. This desire is an open mouth, and is only fed by what he discovers for himself. The vegetable feeds only on what comes to it, and develops no mind. The process of the development of mind is so costly that if God be God or Good the value of what is educed by it must be the supreme value of our world. If, then, by "revelation" we mean knowledge concerning things as yet undiscovered by us, do we expect this knowledge to be given us in a spoon, as it were, from another world? No, we conceive that it must come by the use of our own powers, for only by use can they grow strong enough to assimilate new food. On the other hand, God cannot be anything to which we could give that name if He does not put within reach of our attainment what we require for development. It is because of the Divine Spirit within us that we seek truth; it is because of the Divine Spirit without us that there is truth to discover. This Divine urgence to our new discovery is one consideration which causes us to reject the theory of God and of truth implied in the belief in verbal inspiration or revelation.

The second consideration which causes us to reject

the belief in verbal inspiration is historical. If man did not receive this saving knowledge we infer that God could not give it without doing violence to man's freedom, without stunting the whole development of humanity along the line of free initiation. Because, if God had from time to time imparted knowledge to mankind, either direct from Himself or through any discarnate intelligence who, by being removed ever so little from this earth, might see the trend of earthly events in truer proportion, how very much of the world's misery might have been saved! Even if the instruments of our better information had been the souls of well-intentioned people who had recently left the earth, and who presumably have, as Tennyson says, "larger, other eyes than ours"; it is evident that there is much they might have imparted which would have been of wonderful use to well-intentioned people still in the world.

If Socrates could have imparted to Aristotle right principles of scientific investigation, the communication would not have been more complex or more difficult to reduce to human speech than the messages which spiritualistic books purport to give. If the prophet Moses could have imparted to the prophet Isaiah such truths as that it is not God's will that woman should be regarded as man's chattel, that slavery must disappear with the development of true religion, that animals, children, and servants can be better and more easily trained and controlled by kindness than by the rod, how greatly would even our Western manners have been ameliorated and God vindicated! Or again, how easy it would seem for some of the Apostles to have made it clear to one of their successors—say St. Augustine—that religious persecution was always instigated by evil passions, that torture is not the best way of obtaining truth from a suspected criminal, nor severity of punishment the best way of maintaining discipline. Or if they had revealed to the Church that magic is futile and that

we dishonour God if we either admire or fear or persecute those who profess to exercise it, how enlightening it would have been. If such information, and even information more vital, was not given, the reason must be either that the dead are as ignorant as the living or that they are not able, or do not care, to impart their knowledge to us.

There is, of course, much in what is called "inspired writing" that purports to come by vision, dream, and message. Such visions would seem to be the judgment of the seer, heightened by prayer, taking objective form. Dr. Rufus Jones has made careful analysis of the contents of many of the visions of well-known mystics, and he is convinced that what occurs in such so-called "revelations" is an awareness of the Divine Presence which heightens the natural powers of the mystic, while the actual content of the vision always reflects the thought of his community and age — that is, the heightened power enables the mystic to select from the thoughts possible to his age and place those that are truest, and to give them their best application. Hence, no dictation by God of thought or language is involved, for there is no trace of thought or language that transcends what might be evolved by a religious genius of that age.

Most Old Testament scholars would admit that the same analysis is applicable to the prophetic writings; indeed, in all the greatest utterances of the Bible we see clearly a method of inspiration and revelation very different from the supposed method of verbal inspiration. The universalism of the great Hebrew prophets is clearly a God-guided inference from the character of the good to the character of God.

In the New Testament we see this inference from the judgment or conscience or higher reason of men to the character of God. Our Lord reasoned in this way.[1] "He taught His disciples that they could take the

[1] *The Manhood of the Master*, by Dr. Fosdick, p. 12.

most beautiful aspects of human life, like fatherhood, and lifting them up to the best they could imagine, could say, God is much better than this. 'If ye then, being evil,' He said, 'know how to give good gifts unto your children, *how much more* shall your Father.' . . . Jesus taught men to interpret God in terms of the spiritually best they could imagine. Whatsoever things are just, true, honourable, pure, lovely, and of good report, if there was any virtue and any praise, Jesus affirmed these things of God. When a scientist catches this method of Jesus in thinking of God, he says, in the words of Sir Oliver Lodge, 'I will not believe that it is given to man to have thoughts higher and nobler than the real truth of things.' When a poet takes fire from Jesus's joyful conception of God, he pictures — as Browning does in 'Saul'—a man longing to help his friend and then rising from this human love toward God to cry:

> 'Would I suffer for him that I love? So wouldst Thou—so wilt Thou.'"

If indeed God could — or we might better say "would" — communicate truth in human words or earthly pictures that are not the product of the human mind, what must we conclude concerning His mercy? The old theory was that God dictated thoughts to those who truly served Him and sought truth: if that were so we must conclude, either that those who truly serve God and seek truth are very few, or that in all ages God has left the toiling millions of earth without many kinds of enlightenment that He could have given. Thus, on the hypothesis that it is God's will to limit human freedom so far as to dictate thoughts to His servants, we are driven to a very low estimate, either of the religious morality of men, including even the greatest prophets, or else of God's mercy. On the other hand, if we believe that to those who seek God and truth God imparts His Spirit to heighten all their

powers of thought and feeling and volition so that they may reason truly and read aright the thoughts of God in all creation, we shall infer that the Divine will is the education of the human mind rather than magical or mechanical gifts of knowledge, and we shall be very slow to believe that discarnate spirits find channels for the arbitrary dictation of information concerning our immortal life or our present welfare.

Ghosts

So far nothing has been said of the "evidence" of the presence of discarnate spirits derivable from stories of what used to be called "ghosts" but are now called "apparitions." Near the time of death apparitions of the dead or dying have been frequently seen. The evidence for this is good. But much the most probable interpretation of the evidence is that the apparitions are caused by a subjective telepathic impression. For the person who "appears" does not always die; and occasionally, though in some peril, remains in perfect health. Again if, as is quite likely, a telepathic impression may persist in the mind of the percipient for some time before it is developed in consciousness, the occurrence of such apparitions some time—perhaps a year or two after death—would not prove the presence of a discarnate spirit. Also, if any living person had clearly in mind the form of a dead person, or the form of a traditional ghost, the ghostly appearance of these forms to another person could be explained by thought-transference. I am told that the investigations of the Society for Psychical Research show many cases of unrecognised apparitions. In such cases there is no obvious suggestion of telepathy as in cases where the ghost has been seen, or described by others. We must know more about the psychology of dramatic dreams before we can seriously discuss the causes of such apparitions.

The Anti-social Sin of Credulity

In Psychical Research, more perhaps than in any other subject, progress in our knowledge is hindered by credulity. It is time, and more than time, that we all realised that credulity is an anti-social sin, whether it is shown in regard to this or to any other matter. Credulity may be defined as a disposition to believe on insufficient evidence, or we may call it uncritical belief. Webster's *Dictionary* illustrates by the following quotation from Sir W. Hamilton: "That implicit credulity is the mark of a feeble mind will not be disputed." Since Hamilton's day we make a distinction between those who are by mental defect feeble-minded, whether they will or no, and those who voluntarily indulge in folly to the deterioration of their own powers and the standards of social intelligence. Of the first class it can hardly be affirmed that credulity is a sin; they cannot help it, poor souls; but that any one should voluntarily act as though their powers of reason were naturally impaired, is deliberately dishonouring to themselves and the community, and if they are religious, it is dishonouring to the God they profess to serve and the religious society to which they belong.

It is very difficult to obtain any real evidence for super-normal phenomena. In many cases even what appears to be the best evidence breaks down under critical investigation. It is safe to say that no first-hand evidence can be found for the great majority of the stories of "evidential" messages from mediums or ghosts. Track it as far as we will, it is nearly always "some one else" who saw the ghost. If we are sure we have good second-hand evidence, we may place it in our minds as something about which we hold our judgment in suspense—a very different attitude from that of belief. Unless we have first-hand evidence which stands the test of any questions as to details which we put, it is not worth while to believe the story. When we have

first-hand evidence offered to us the first point to decide is whether the percipient is a person reliable about other things—first as to honesty of intention, and secondly, as to good judgment. If either of these points is doubtful, we may well doubt the story. Given these points satisfactorily settled, and assured that our friends were not half-asleep or unwell, we have to bear in mind that the wisest of us is quite frequently under delusions about the ordinary happenings of life. If you cross-question several people about any one incident which they have all observed, you will find the evidence so conflicting upon some points that it becomes clear that one or two of them thought they saw something which they did not see, or thought they heard something they did not hear. And this degree of inaccuracy, common as it is even among truthful or mentally trained people, must throw uncertainty on the greater number of marvellous stories. Very common examples of inaccuracy are stories of mediumistic messages which purport to come from the other world and are alleged to state facts unknown at the time but afterwards verified. In such cases it can almost always be discovered, either that the message is not repeated exactly as the medium gave it, or, if accurately reported, that it does not precisely define the fact it is supposed to have revealed, or that the fact was really known to some one concerned before the medium revealed it—in which last case telepathy is not ruled out. Unless we can be quite certain that we have accuracy on all these points, and that our friend, in retailing the story, is not relying merely on that treacherous thing, the story-teller's memory, the story is not worth harbouring in our minds.

Let us examine for a moment the harm it does to give currency to untrue stories of this sort. Suppose in a community of one thousand persons there are three veridical cases of super-normal phenomena, and that there are twenty-five stories in all of such phenomena

which pass from one to another and are believed by half the community. Twenty-two of these stories will be founded, either upon the exaggerations of rumour, or upon a misunderstanding, or upon delusion of some sort. Now, the three veridical cases are of real importance, because they can furnish some further evidence for some serious hypothesis with regard to our communication with the unseen. It is therefore important that they should receive serious attention, be analysed and probed to the uttermost, and classified, so that we may find out whether some hypothesis which has accounted for other cases can be held to also explain them, or whether they add evidence in favour of some other hypothesis. It is only thus that any real knowledge on such matters can be acquired, and it is only upon genuine fact that we can base any reasonable inference for some fresh aspect of faith. The result of the credulity which adds to the currency of three veridical cases some twenty-two which will not bear any examination, is that the unbelieving half of the community will not give fair consideration to what is worth it. They find themselves wading knee-deep in nonsense if they listen to reports, and will therefore turn a deaf ear to all. But this is not the only harm done. All stories of super-normal phenomena which are true will tally with each other in certain respects, will corroborate a true hypothesis when such exists; but untrue stories may easily discredit the truest hypothesis, and when they are believed and repeated confuse the minds of even genuine researchers.

But the anti-social sin of credulity does not belong only to spiritualists. A certain class of religious thinkers, even to-day, encourage a much worse form of credulity in preaching the terrors of demonic influence. On this point I will quote, with his permission, from a recent sermon of the Master of the Temple, printed in *The Guardian* of February 22, 1917 :—

"Superstition is the acceptance of religious beliefs

which are contrary to or not justified by the assured results of human experience and human thought. Superstitions die hard. To observe accurately and to draw just conclusions from one's observation is not easy. Metaphysics, the study of the nature of ultimate reality, is a difficult subject. And, moreover, the interpretation of religious experience which the average man makes for himself is unlikely to be satisfactory. Primitive explanations of God and His realm of action continue to be too readily accepted by the unreflective mind. Man progresses slowly; and the mass of men will often accept or hark back to false ideas which the leaders of the thought of their time condemn. Especially is this likely to be true at a period of emotional activity.

"The modern consensus of educated opinion which regards magic and witchcraft as worthless imposture is little more than two centuries old. Belief in the possibility of magical practices was almost universal until the middle of the seventeenth century, and the record of the teaching and legislation of Christendom in regard to such matters is deplorable reading. Those who are unfamiliar with Europe's history of blood-stained credulity should read the first chapter of Lecky's *History of Rationalism in Europe.* They will find that Church Councils from the Synod of Elvira in A.D. 306 onwards not only denounced the practice, but firmly believed in the possibility of black magic. St. Thomas Aquinas, the ablest theologian of the fourteenth century, maintained alike its reality and heretical nature. Gerson, who possibly wrote the *Imitatio Christi*, defended the belief. The Inquisition drenched Europe in blood to extirpate witchcraft. And Luther and the followers of Calvin were at one with Rome in believing it true that diabolical powers were derived from the devilish compacts which they denounced.

"Nor did theologians alone hold such superstitious beliefs. Many of the ablest English Judges of the

sixteenth and seventeenth centuries conducted elaborate trials of witches, and by their speeches and judgments showed that they fully shared the popular credulity. The fact should be a significant warning that often in psychical investigations even the ablest men discover what they set out to seek. Gradually, however, the superstition vanished. In England the last trial for witchcraft occurred in 1712, and the laws against sorcery were repealed without controversy in 1736.

"It is sad reading—this record of the struggles of the Christian Church and of Christian communities to free themselves from primitive demonology; from beliefs long anterior to Christianity, still referred to in Italy as *la vecchia religione*. I would not mention the subject to-day but for my fear lest a belief in demonology should be revived. Lecky points out how, whenever disease or political catastrophe has made men acutely conscious of evil, or when the growth of a new spirit of critical enquiry has challenged the optimism of an assured faith, the rapid growth of a belief in magic, with all its evil consequences, has shown itself. Shall we see the same terrible return to human error as a result of present calamities?

"Last Wednesday Lord Halifax, the President of the English Church Union, spoke at St. Martin's-in-the-Fields on Sir Oliver Lodge's *Raymond*. I rejoice to see that one usually regarded as the spokesman of a large party in the English Church warned his hearers of the evil results which often attend the morbid excitements of spiritualism. When I discussed the subject in this church I tried to urge with equal emphasis the danger to moral health which those incur who enter the atmosphere of fraud, delusion, and psychical pathology that surrounds séances. I pointed out that the evidence for communication with the dead was entirely inadequate to establish the fact, and urged Christians to leave such investigations to highly-trained unemotional scientific observers. But if I understand aright the copious

extracts from his address, given in *The Guardian* of Thursday last, Lord Halifax does not regard the practices of the medium as a mixture of imposture and delusion. He credits her with some, at least, of the supposed powers of the old witch. He explicitly likens the controls, Feda, Moonstone, and the like, to the familiar spirits Pluck, Catch, and so forth, who figured in a celebrated trial for witchcraft in 1593. Apparently —I fear that I do him no injustice — he accepts the mediaeval demonology that we thought we had discarded. He states that in the communications of the medium 'the evil is plain, and for a Christian the source of their inspiration is clear.' He asks Sir Oliver Lodge whether the knowledge assumed to be possessed by Raymond may not 'come from an altogether different source,' and significantly in the next sentence says: 'Satan for his own purposes can transform himself into an angel of light.'

"The difference between my own view of spiritualism and that of Lord Halifax can be summed up in a sentence by using an oft-employed metaphor. I do not think that there is any evidence to prove that telephonic communication with the other world has been established; his lordship thinks that a devil is speaking into the receiver at the other end."

The Gains of Psychical Investigation

So far we have been dealing with the objections to accepting the main evidence for communication with discarnate spirits which has been advanced by the Spiritualists and the enquirers of the S.P.R. On the other hand, there are, I feel convinced, two very substantial gains which come to us through these channels. The first is that an important, if only initial, step has been taken towards discovering the ways in which mind may prove itself independent of the body; and, secondly, we have a mass of evidence which cannot be ignored

that living people have felt themselves to be in the presence of, and in some sort of tacit communion with, departed spirits.

In regard to the first of these points, another essay in this book [1] makes it clear how far such phenomena as telepathy between living minds and the clairvoyance of the hypnotic state tend towards a rational belief in the survival of the human soul in its integrity. These telepathic powers seem to involve will, memory, and reason; therefore the evidence for telepathy and clairvoyance strengthens the presumption that these powers do not pass away at death. For if thought can traverse the world, and make itself comprehensible between men at a distance, it is thereby proved not to be dependent upon sense connections. It need only here be added that while the investigators of the S.P.R. tell us again and again that their object in proving the fact of verbal communications is to show that the soul in passing through death does not lose the normal powers which characterised it here, they have gone very far to establish a strong presumption of the survival of these powers, without proving these communications.

The second point will require a more detailed consideration. What is the value of the witness of many honest people who are assured that they have experienced some sort of contact with their discarnate friends? If we admit the testimony of religious experience as one ground for our belief in the possibility of communion with God, we cannot disregard this conviction of honest people that they commune with their dead. For this conviction is separable from, and is quite independent of, any stimuli offered to the senses in objective apparitions, or movements of objects, or voices, or human words dictated to mediums who speak or write. All these things appeal to our senses, and we have as yet no proof that they are not all the work of the subconscious earthly human mind. But

[1] "The Mind and the Brain," pp. 52 ff.

the hypothesis I would suggest is that these things occur as the result of an effort to interpret the sense of the "presence" of a discarnate spirit which I believe to be veridical, but that they are usually a mistaken interpretation. For when we sum up all such sensuous experiences, how unsatisfactory they are if regarded as a true interpretation of our relation to the world of departed spirits! But in spite of this I think we may take it that the effort of spiritualists to interpret, the constant recurrence of this effort, the insistence of the human soul on this aspect of life, does indeed point to reality—*i.e.* to the existence of a real touch between the visible and invisible worlds.

I personally find it incredible that so many reasonable and truth-loving people should have followed this way for so many years and should have so easily accepted as cogent evidence that which, when examined dispassionately, appears insufficient, unless they had had some true experience which cast a glamour of apparent truth over much that was false. Further, if, on other grounds, we believe both in immortality and that the character of God and of His universe is such that those who seek find, it appears more reasonable to believe that those who earnestly sought to come in contact with some one they had loved and lost, found what they sought, and, experiencing the inner truth of this, and in the light of it, interpreted sensuous phenomena which but for this would have appeared trivial and inconclusive.

It has, of course, become a dogma with many men of science that this life is cut off from any invisible life, if such there be, beyond the grave. On the whole, this has been a very respectable belief, both for men of science and for religious people who desired to think reasonably. For it must be remembered that the choice as presented to minds in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries lay between becoming a victim of the silly fears engendered by the common ghost story

and disbelieving the possibility of any communion between the dead and the living. It lay, also, between the conception of God's aloofness, which made supplication to the Virgin and the saints necessary to a cheerful life of prayer, and the conception of the human mind as having access only to God and to none else in the invisible world; between explaining away all vivid telepathic impressions as mere coincidence, and believing every phantasm of the mind to have objective reality. The choice they made was a wise one under the circumstances, for nothing more inhibits true faith than the superstition that peoples the unseen with romantic beings for whose existence there is no shred of real evidence.

We are not in their position. For us there is sufficient evidence, gathered mainly by the honoured labours of those who have done yeoman's service in the S.P.R., of the power of mind to communicate with mind irrespective of material contact, to justify us in revising the verdict of the sturdy common sense of our ancestors.

In the first place, all "ghost" stories and stories of apparently supernatural knowledge, when they can be proved true, can be explained more reasonably by the telepathic hypothesis than by any other. We need no longer be afraid that intelligent minds will succumb to theories of the supernatural world based on fantastic mental experiences, nor need we fear the dominance of any religious system which teaches that men must be afraid of speaking directly to God, or that any lesser spirit can be nearer to them than Divine Love. Again, we have already much careful evidence as to the nature and result of telepathic impressions, and we look forward confidently to the progress of scientific research along this line; but what we already know convinces us that when such a telepathic impression comes into consciousness, the thought or feeling of the agent or agents giving the impression is already mixed with the interpretation of the individual mind which receives it.

So that individual experience of this sort must always be referred to the common sense of the many, must be assimilated to all else that is found true or credible, before what is received in this way, even if it did come from another world, can be counted as adding to the store of truth.

We may, therefore, with perfect safety ask ourselves whether within our own experience we may not find real evidence of telepathic touch with discarnate spirits.

We have already learned that there is much more in our actual experience than we consciously attend to. A common illustration of this is that when we come to know a new word we see it frequently in books and newspapers. This is not because it suddenly enters books and newspapers, but because before we learned the word, to use the Gospel phrase, "our eyes were holden" and we did not see it. We had eyes and we saw not. So in our summer gardens, after we learn to distinguish the note of a certain bird, we constantly hear that little bird singing to us in the bushes. The bird sang before our enlightenment. We had ears but we did not hear it, and were only conscious of the larks and thrushes whose notes we had learned in our childhood.

We need not on this account suppose that we need "a sign from heaven" in order to receive a new revelation about the things which belong to our peace.

An artist is constantly making discoveries—seeing in colour and form what he never saw before, but what was always there to be seen. Again, there are many authentic instances of men and women under an anaesthetic or in delirium having shown themselves able to remember matters they had never consciously known. Similarly, then, it is possible that in the experience of the inner life evidence may be found which, if it tally with all else that is true and reasonable, may give us real light on things at present

unapprehended. I was once speaking to a man distinguished in practical affairs, and I chanced to say of a family matter, "How much this would delight your wife if she were still living and could know it." He replied, "She is living, and she does know it." I said, "How do you know she knows it?" He replied quite simply, "I asked God to tell her, and after that I knew that she knew." We are too reverent to probe such an experience as this, but the quiet certainty of his tone convinced me that some experience had satisfied his own well-balanced judgment. Yet at another time this same man could speak with some contempt of people who imagined they could have sensuous impressions of what was spiritual. Such an experience as that I have just quoted recalls to our minds the undoubted fact, which all to whom God has revealed Himself will recognise, that in God we have, if we will use it, a means of speaking to our beloved dead.

My own opinion is that there is real ground for reverent investigation; much to encourage us, along with much negative evidence to discourage us. If there is truth to be discovered and we meet only with what seems to us blank negation, we must remember that our own negative attitude toward the whole subject would be only too likely to make us deaf and blind. I think the method most likely to be safe and helpful for most of us is—while never omitting to bring all our fears, doubts, hopes, and questions to God—to pray for the welfare of those whom we have loved and who are lost to sight, and after such prayer, take time to think of them in the silence and ask ourselves whether we have not some reason to believe that they also are thinking of us.

To make clear what I take to be the distinction between "the sense of presence" and any evidence of verbal communication with a discarnate spirit, I would refer to the family "table-sittings" which Sir

Oliver Lodge so faithfully describes in his book, *Raymond.*

In these "table-sittings" of the Lodge family in their attempts to communicate with Raymond, we are strongly impressed with the sense of Raymond's presence, which is here so graphically described. I get this impression all through the book. What I would suggest is that this sense of presence may be perfectly veridical, but that the actions of the table may have been entirely the result of the subconscious mentality of the Lodge family, and the character of its movements decided by minds strongly moved by that sense of presence.

"A family sitting," says Sir Oliver,[1] "with no medium present is quite different from one held with a professional or indeed any outside medium. Information is freely given about the doings of the family; and the general air is that of a family conversation." And again[2] he says that when a table is employed the communicators (*i.e.* the spirits of the dead persons) "say they feel more *directly* in touch with the sitters than when they operate through an intermediary or 'control' on their side. . . It (the table) can indicate joy or sorrow, fun or gravity. . . and, most notable of all, it can exhibit affection in a most notable manner."

When serious-minded persons speak of a table as "exhibiting affection," one can only suppose that an overwhelming sense of the presence of the spirit of the departed has caused the family group to read into the motions of the table a meaning which is really derived from their own inner experience of direct contact with an unseen person.

I have myself experienced the tilting and dancing of a table under the hands of several people and the inexhaustible but coherent platitudes it could so spell out. But in my experience, although the table did all these things, and although the four people

[1] Cf. *Raymond*, p. 218. [2] *Ibid.* pp. 363-364.

whose finger-tips were on it were quite incapable of deception and unconscious of producing the fantastic results, there was no medium present and no talk or thought of discarnate spirits. We had been told that the "subliminal self"—whatever that was—could tilt tables; we did not believe it, but upon trying we found that it could. We none of us had the slightest doubt—nor have I yet—that the mechanical force and rudimentary intelligence came in some way from ourselves. If the mechanical force come from the "sitters"—in our case we had to run round the room after the table—there can be no reason to suppose that the "sitters" do not also supply the intelligence.

On this point, Sir Oliver Lodge admits (p. 137): "The effort required to tilt the table is slight, and evidentially it must no doubt be assumed that so far as mechanical force is concerned it is exerted by muscular action."

But though I hold this view of the origin of the mechanical force exerted, the account of private family sittings at Mariemont (Pt. II. chap. xix.) suggests to me the inference that the spirit of Raymond was probably with them and able so to come into personal touch with them that they were perfectly aware of (1) his presence, (2) his sympathy with their moods and diversions, (3) his desire to assure them of his own integrity and continued happiness. But I remain unconvinced that anything that the table did or said was a correct interpretation of Raymond's thoughts in detail.

Conclusion

The real cause of the hold which Spiritualism has on many religious minds is the failure of the Church to realise in practice the meaning of the Communion of Saints. The Mediaeval Church failed on account of the unchristian superstition which pictured the next stage of existence as a state of mere torture and punish-

ment. The reaction of the Protestant mind against mercenary prayers and ceremonies to relieve the misery of the souls in Purgatory was healthy. But with this came in another superstition, that it was wrong to pray for the dead or to believe in their fellowship with the living. In so far as it is a reaction against this newer superstition, Spiritualism shows a healthy instinct. But the methods employed by spiritualists to bridge with friendly overtures the stream of death appear to be mistaken and therefore dangerous. They are, at best, only a roundabout way of obtaining a sense of companionship with those who have passed on, since the same sense of companionship might be obtained better and more easily by prayer. Then, too, when this sense of companionship is attained in the spiritualistic séance, or by some private automatic means, it is inevitably mixed with, and confused by, communications from the inner mind of the medium or agent, which is always subject to telepathic intrusions from—none can tell whom.

In the concluding essay of this volume I hope to show how love can open a door between this life and the next, by which we can get more real knowledge of that next life and a truer communion with those who have entered into it than we can by any attempts to get sensuous indications of their presence through mediums, table-turning, or other such means. I have read a good deal of Spiritualist literature, and—apart from the light it incidentally sheds on purely scientific problems like telepathy—I think that the grain of wheat in the chaff is this sense of presence, which I believe to be authentic and to be the real cause why many really noble minds accept evidence of sensuous communications on most insufficient grounds.

VIII

REINCARNATION, KARMA AND THEOSOPHY

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"PRO CHRISTO ET ECCLESIA"
(LILY DOUGALL)

SYNOPSIS

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VIII

REINCARNATION, KARMA AND THEOSOPHY

PART I.—REINCARNATION AND KARMA

Reincarnation as Philosophical Theory

The doctrine of Reincarnation presents itself to the thought of the modern Western world with the prestige derivable from the fact of its primitive and widespread currency. It comes down to us through two ancient and apparently independent traditions of religious philosophy. One tradition derives from the doctrine of Karma, which first appears in the early Upanishads of India about the seventh century B.C. It was adopted into Buddhism with certain modifications, but as these characteristic modifications have disappeared in later Buddhism, the doctrine of Karma in its original form has become the very core of the religious belief of a large portion of mankind. At the present day, through the influence of modern Theosophy, it is beginning to gain large numbers of adherents in Europe and America. Along another line of tradition the doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul comes to us from Plato, being derived by him, it is supposed, from the Orphic Mysteries, which were probably uninfluenced by Indian thought; and it is being upheld on metaphysical grounds at the present day by no less a philosopher than Dr. McTaggart. An ancient doctrine so widely

held and so ably supported cannot be dismissed without serious consideration, whatever one may think of some of the other views of the religions and sects, ancient and modern, which maintain it.

Dr. McTaggart's doctrine of Reincarnation is bound up with his metaphysical belief in a pluralistic universe, and stands or falls with it. A critical examination of the theory of a pluralistic universe cannot be undertaken in this place; but it may be pointed out that it is not shared by most modern philosophers or by the writers of this volume. We need not, therefore, deal here with his argument for Reincarnation, which is a mere corollary of his general metaphysic. It may be noted, however, that he rejects any argument for the immortality of the soul which is based on the goodness of God; but he perceives that, assuming the goodness of God, as the Christian thinker does, immortality could be proved more easily than pre-existence. Given its premises, he allows the force of the Christian argument for immortality in the following passage:—

"Arguments of this type (assuming the universe the work of a benevolent creator) could prove immortality more readily than they could prove pre-existence. No wrong can be done to the non-existent, and it could hardly be made a reproach to the goodness of the universe that it had waited a long time before it produced a particular person. But, once produced, any person has a certain moral claim, and if it could be shown that his annihilation was inconsistent with those claims, we could argue from the goodness of the universe to the impossibility of his annihilation."[1]

Belief in the transmigration of souls, or Metempsychosis, seems to appear in its earliest definite form as totemism. Many totemistic tribes believe that at death man becomes like his totem—a tiger, an ox, a frog, etc. Further, they explain conception as the descent of some discarnate spirit from some dead tree

[1] *Human Immortality and Pre-existence*, by Dr. J. M. E. McTaggart, p. 75.

or animal.[1] From all this it is an easy step to the later idea that the better men might again become men. It is obvious that in speculating, as all men have done, upon what may happen to the soul after death, the thought of a return to the only life they know is a very natural one; in any case, it was a belief common to many tribes and to several ancient civilisations.

But though Reincarnation was in earlier ages a very natural belief, and may seem attractive now to those who seek authority from the past, there are certain considerations which, I think, combine to present an argument of some weight against it.

(1) The objection to Reincarnation which perhaps first strikes us is the lack of conscious continuity between the incarnations of a soul. Even granting all that may be claimed to exist in this life as "intimations" of a former life or lives, it amounts to very little; one feels that a future life that has no more conscious connection with this one than this has with any former life is not worth accepting as personal immortality, indeed a continuance of memory is necessary to personality.

It is true that, under the pressure of the Christian stress on personal immortality, later Oriental thinkers maintain that the soul when it attains a certain elevation is able between its incarnations to look back on all its past lives, and that when it rises high in the scale of being it is able to bring this continuous memory back into its earthly lives. Modern Theosophists claim, indeed, that their Adepts, now alive upon earth, have such a continuous memory. No adequate evidence is forthcoming, however, to substantiate this claim; and it must be noted that the thing which on this theory is supposed to survive and be reincarnated is at best not a person; it is something which has lost all emotion and all desire. Judging the doctrine on *a priori* grounds, the ordinary man will deem it weary work to plod through some hundreds of reincarnations before

[1] Consult *The Way of Nirvāna*, by Professor de la Vallée Poussin, pp. 11, 18.

attaining to any continuous thread of memory connecting them.

(2) Again, it is important to observe how geocentric at bottom the doctrine is—a fact not often realised. Hindu philosophers no doubt held vaguely the existence of other worlds in different cycles of manifestation; but the geocentric conception of our present universe, common when the belief was formulated, prevented the belief in other worlds having any discernible influence on their theory of the future life. We find the influence of the same geocentric conception of the universe in other religious philosophies. For the Greeks there was but one world where discipline and social experience were possible. For us there are other, probably habitable, worlds, and no need to hold the difficult doctrine of physical rebirth as the mode of the soul's entrance to them. Even assuming its further experience is in material conditions, when we think of the vastness of this magnificent universe of ours, of its innumerable solar systems, no idea could be more unnatural to us, if we did not inherit it from the past, than that this remote speck of star-dust called our earth should be the only part of it utilised by God for the progress of the human soul. It is, of course, conceivable that human souls should be so bound to this planet that they must return again and again by rebirth, but it does not appear the more reasonable hypothesis. It certainly seems to us a gratuitous limitation of possibility to assume as axiomatic that only in this little corner of the universe, and under the exact physical conditions of life here, can our destiny be worked out. This geocentric conception of a future life, almost necessary to an earlier age, in our days bespeaks, not merely an intellectual limitation, but poverty of imagination. To us the discovery of the infinite range of a universe teeming with millions of worlds has indeed made the earth seem smaller, but it has made the possibilities for the future life seem infinitely wider and more varied.

Notwithstanding this, it is true that to the imagination of many people the enormous number of souls which earth appears to generate through successive ages presents a real difficulty which belief in successive rebirths would meet. These spiritual Malthusians are greatly occupied with the housing problem. They cry, "What limit is there otherwise to the generations? Where can they be accommodated?" To other minds the multiplicity of solar systems extending in space as far as we can hazard any guess, with their innumerable habitable worlds which it is reasonable to suppose available, is a corresponding difficulty. In any case it is more reasonable to suppose that the two difficulties have a corresponding solution than to assume a number of successive births and deaths for every soul. We must not forget that both theologians and philosophers[1] carried a tidy-minded desire to limit the number of worlds in the universe to an absurd extreme before they would admit the logical inference of astronomical discovery; it is exactly the same limitation of thought that makes us imagine that a universe with fewer souls would be more tidy.

Dr. James Ward[2] argues that, viewed from the general standpoint of science, "the probability is not against, but enormously in favour of, a plurality of worlds, as men of science almost unanimously allow"; and goes on to show that, "granted that in the one universe there are many worlds, the Christian theologian has the strongest grounds for believing that they are spiritually and historically, and not merely physically, interconnected."

All these worlds may, for aught we know, be stages in the destiny of each human person. He may pass from world to world with memory intact and without physical rebirth. He may continue his age-long progress in the society of his own generation and possibly

[1] See *Pluralism and Theism*, by Dr. J. Ward, pp. 181-184.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 184.

also of preceding and following generations. This is, of course, speculation, but so also is the theory of reincarnation on this earth.

(3) Much ancient thought, with the exception, perhaps, of Semitic and Persian varieties, conceived of the soul's spiritual life as solitary. A right attitude and course of action toward other beings was part of its discipline, but the aim was to get beyond this discipline. The aim and goal of the soul's progress being thus non-social, it was natural to suppose that until the jostling with fellow-creatures experienced in this life had had its perfect work, the soul must return again and again to this earth. The Hebrew conception of social virtues and social obligations as "eternal" (aeonian), and of social salvation as a goal, has been endorsed by Christianity and is more in harmony with all that sociology and social psychology have of late years been teaching us of the unity of the race and of our mutual interdependence.

All this drives the modern mind to think of every stage in the soul's future, during probation or in heaven, as social, and makes it impossible to suppose that social experience and social discipline only obtain in the earthly life.

(4) Again, in Hindu thought the doctrine of reincarnation is bound up with the ancient idea that all being proceeds in endless cycles, and that in the universe all things tend to repeat themselves by an endless return. But, though this theory of the revolving wheel of existence fascinated the ancient Indian mind, and appealed by the splendour and sweep of the conception embodied in it to some of the Greek and Roman poets and thinkers, modern science offers us no shadow of proof, or even presumption, that physical creation revolves in returning cycles. For the modern thinker the idea is obsolete, and so also is the analogy it furnished for the conception of the soul as revolving on an eternal wheel of life and death.

(5) A final difficulty concerning Reincarnation is little touched upon by its advocates, that is, that it makes childhood, which appears so beautiful and so holy as the beginning of a virgin soul, a gigantic lie, merely a part of nature's protective mimicry intended to deceive parental love and human reverence, the greatest of the illusions of sense. It is hard to conceive how any mother can look into the dawning intelligence of her child's eyes and be satisfied to believe that in innumerable past lives that same soul has gone through experience savage and civilised, has probably been in turn harlot or rake, victim or tyrant, wife or warrior, layman or priest, and perhaps all these a hundred times.

If we take the beauty of that story of Jesus Christ setting a little child in the midst of His disciples and telling them that to become "like this little child" is to find the door of the heavenly kingdom, we shall realise how for us the whole beauty and point of the scene vanish if we think of the soul of that child as already an aged pilgrim, scarred and seamed by evil experience, only innocent in the sense in which the senile are innocent when memory entirely fails.

The facts of life often advanced as arguments for pre-existence are the following :—

(*a*) The sudden friendship that often springs up between people before unknown to each other.

To account for this it may be urged that the extraordinary complexity of human life, the innumerable strains of heredity that are combined in any child's inheritance, would seem sufficient to account for such characteristic predelictions ; whereas if they indicated recognition of the friends of a past life, and if all human beings now living had experienced many lives, such recognitions ought to be of more frequent occurrence, for even among people whom Theosophists would consider on a similar plane of development they are comparatively rare.

(*b*) It is argued that the tendencies and qualities in precocious children which do not seem to be accounted for by either ancestry or environment are proofs of knowledge acquired in some previous life. But the evidence seems to point the other way, for there is, again, the great difficulty that infant prodigies so very rarely occur, and when they do, their genius always has to do with numbers, and runs to music or arithmetic. This suggests that it follows some psychic law by which the operations of the mind having to do with numbers may be early and abnormally developed. We do not get any good evidence of child-philosophers or child-painters or child-statesmen or child-scientists; yet if the acquirements of a past life were the cause of infant precocity we surely should get all these.

On the whole, those arguments from the nature of the self which seem to me to point to the probability of its immortality do not appear to point also to a series of former births and deaths, but rather to a spiritual origin for all that we may call created life, the soul of each child being interpreted as a differentiation of the universal life which comes from God.

It appears, then, that unless there exists some strong reason, based on our perceptions of moral necessity, to believe in a multiplicity of earthly lives for each soul, this hypothesis of the whence and whither of every earthly life may be set aside. The doctrine of Karma, however, is held by many to afford just such a valid reason for belief in reincarnation, and this we have now to consider.

Karma and Retribution

Attractiveness of the Doctrine

Not long ago I heard at a London dinner-table a conversation among rather influential, but quite ordinary, religious people.

One lady said with a touch of scorn, "I have too much respect for personality to believe in the transmigration of souls; the soul that had been a hundred different persons would have no personality."

Another vigorously replied, "I could not believe in God if I did not believe in Reincarnation and Karma. Before I understood those great truths I wasted my energy raging at the injustice of the universe; now I can work intelligently."

The first answered, "I don't understand your idea of justice."

The other retorted confidently, "The law of Karma is the only perfect justice; it alone vindicates perfect righteousness. In it we see that each soul suffers precisely according to its sins; no one suffers for the sins of another. When men are born to suffering it is because in past lives they have deserved it; and it is only by deserving something better that they can escape suffering. We owe a great debt to the Theosophists for having taught us this."

The conversation then became general, and, upon the whole, most present were inclined to assent to the doctrine of Reincarnation and Karma as a good working hypothesis, because it satisfied their belief in the moral government of the world.

It is well to realise clearly what are the strong points of this doctrine. These seem to be :—

First; it is an attempt to solve the greatest of all moral and religious problems—the problem of evil. It is an attempt to affirm, in the face of apparently contradictory experience, the fundamental conviction of the human heart that the Universe in the last resort is morally governed. As such, it invites a sympathetic consideration.

Secondly; it clearly recognises the prevalence of the law of cause and effect in the moral sphere. Every action has inevitable consequences, and those consequences extend beyond the present life of the individual.

Thus, it is an emphatic asseveration of moral responsibility and of the eternal consequences of right choice.

Thirdly ; it gives a moral basis for a conception of the nature and character of the future life which it is easy for the most unimaginative to grasp.

Origin of the Doctrine

The doctrine of Karma originated with the Indo-Aryan tribes during the period in which they were subjugating northern India. A very interesting and easily accessible account of it is given in the Hibbert Lectures of Professor de la Vallée Poussin.

Karma did not form a part of the religion which these early Aryan tribes brought with them into India. Modern teachers of Brahmanism read the doctrine into the hymns of this early religion by a process of interpretation akin to that which has been used by Christians in reading later Christian beliefs into the Old Testament. It seems certain, however, that the religion of this noble and most gifted race, as seen in the Rigveda, is free from pessimistic ponderings on the problem of evil and the terrible entail of sin.

Professor Poussin thus describes the earlier belief of the Rigveda :—

"Superstitions connected with the belief that the dead are living in the grave, depending for this shadowy life on the offering poured on the grave, are not abolished in the Vedic civilisation. The general view is nevertheless an altogether hopeful one. The dead, who are called the Fathers, do not envy the living as did Achilles. Some of them are now gods. The first of the mortals, Yama—'who first went over the great mountains and spied out a path for many, who found us a way of which we shall not be frustrated'—Yama the King sits under a tree with Varuna the righteous god. The Fathers are gathered around him, drinking nectar, enjoying the libations of the living, enjoying

also—and this point is worthy of notice—their own pious works, their sacrifices and their gifts, especially their gifts to the priests. The abode of the Fathers is an immortal, unending world. 'There make me immortal,' says the Vedic poet, 'where exist delight, joy, rejoicing, and joyance, where wishes are obtained.' It is not a spiritual paradise. Whatever poetical descriptions we may find, 'supreme luminous regions, middle sky, third heaven, lap of the red dawns,' the pleasures of the Fathers are essentially mundane ones; rivers of mead, milk, and waters, pools of butter with banks of honey, also Apsarases or celestial damsels. The dead were happy; their life was worthy to be lived."[1]

Professor Poussin is concerned to account for the ascetic religious "disciplines" which arose about the seventh century B.C., and, contrasting them with the early religion of the Vedas, says:—

"One sees how radical a change was necessary for asceticism and the disciplines of salvation to be possible. . . . What were the causes of this change? . . . To begin with, we must not forget that the Sanscrit-speaking peoples, the priestly and feudal aristocracy who created the disciplines of salvation, were no longer of unmixed Aryan race, as the old poets of the Vedas, but a mixture of Aryas and of the aborigines. . . . It is certain that the 'intellectual' Aryas, at the time of the compilation of the Rigveda and later on, did not feel as their ancestors did. . . . This aristocracy was likely to borrow from the aborigines, and from the mass of the Aryan people in daily contact with the aborigines, many superstitions or beliefs — confused notions connected with penance, ecstasy, reincarnations. . . . Such notions, it is certain, they borrowed: this can be proved in many cases. . . . The change we are studying is, to a large extent, not a revolution, but an evolution; and the safest way to understand it is perhaps to describe it as an autonomous alteration of

[1] *The Way of Nirvāna*, pp. 12-14.

the genuine Aryan beliefs and notions. The Brahmans, endowed with an equal genius for conservation and adaptation, were the workers of the change. . . . The Brahmans were, by profession, busied with gods, sacrifice, and ritual. After a time, before even the Rigveda was compiled, they became philosophers." [1]

An interesting account of the course of their thought as it may be conjectured from evidence in the Upanishads, is given by Dr. J. N. Farquhar :—

"This theory, that a man's health and fortune in this life are the recompense of his deeds (in this life), has been held by many other early peoples, notably by early Israel. But facts are too stubborn for such a theory : clearly it is not true. The stage in Israel's history when the old belief became incredible comes vividly before us in the Book of Job. We may conjecture that at the time when the transmigration theory came to the notice of the Indo-Aryans, they had by experience found the theory of material recompense in this life untenable, and that they seized on the idea of transmigration as a means of solving the problem. But all this is but conjecture. We know only that in the 'Brihadāranyaka' and 'Chhāndogya Upanishads' a few of the more advanced men teach, as a new and precious truth, the doctrine that as a man sows in this life he will reap in another.

"From these passages it seems clear that the doctrine was first thought out and stated with reference to the future, and that it was some little time before reflection led to the further thought, that a man's present circumstances and experience are the recompense of his behaviour in past lives. Then this train of thought, carried farther both backward and forward, would inevitably lead to the conclusion that the series of lives can have neither beginning nor end."

With regard to the desire for release from this chain of rebirths, he remarks :—

[1] *The Way of Nirvāna*, pp. 16-19.

"When reflection had made some progress, men began to regard these many lives as most undesirable, and to long for emancipation from the necessity of rebirth. When this unexpected change occurred, men began to deplore their own good deeds, because they led to rebirth as surely as their evil deeds; so, that which originally was the highest possible reward became hated."[1]

As it thus appears in the original Hindu philosophy it would seem that the doctrine of Karma was first and foremost an attempt to solve the moral problem—the problem discussed at length in the Book of Job—of the glaring injustice apparent in this life in the matter of individual merit and prosperity. Why is it that some are born to lives of hardship, misery, disease, and failure, others to lives of ease, prosperity, and fulness of opportunity? Ought not this difference, if it exists at all, to have some close correspondence with differences in degree of goodness or badness in the character or lives of the persons concerned? The Indian philosophers explained the enigma by the hypothesis that seemingly unmerited misfortunes in this life are really the punishment for wickedness in a previous existence, while seemingly undeserved prosperity in this life is the due reward for goodness in a previous existence.

Sin and Suffering

It will be seen that the doctrine of Karma takes for granted that wrong action both ought to be and can be expiated by suffering. This idea is not confined to Hindus or Theosophists. It is implicit in the traditional, but, as is shown elsewhere in this volume,[2] the really unscriptural, conception of Hell; and it is the view of the functions of the pains of Purgatory of which Suarez is the most notable exponent, and which

[1] *The Crown of Hinduism*, by J. N. Farquhar, D.Litt., pp. 136-137, 138.
[2] Essay V.

has prevailed almost universally in the Roman Church. Indeed, it has been very widely held until comparatively modern times, and it cannot be said that the reaction against it is by any means complete even among enlightened statesmen, philosophers, or theologians. Nevertheless, I believe it to be as fundamentally unsound as it is antagonistic to the best modern thought upon human justice. In spite of the eminence of some of the names of those who still uphold it, I would maintain that the vindictive or retributive theory of punishment, which requires that suffering be proportioned to sin, is in the last resort a relic of the primitive savagery which confused justice with vengeance and then attributed its own conception of justice to the divine.

The requirement of a moral universe is that sin once committed should at all costs be removed—*i.e.* the injury inflicted must be made good and the sinner must be made righteous. But how is this to be done? Does the torture of the sinner accomplish it?

To answer this a slight analysis of the theory of human punishment is necessary.

It is evident—no one would dispute it—that legal and domestic punishments, which are based on the retributive theory, have been a very useful social device: (*a*) as an emphatic expression of moral opinion where it has so far made for itself no other mode of expression; (*b*) as deterrent—helping to prevent wrongdoing by fear; (*c*) as arresting a sinner on a heady course and evoking reflection.

In all these ways social and domestic punishment has been an immense advance on moral anarchy. But the questions we have to ask are:

(1) Does the suffering of the sinner do away with the injury his sin has done to others?

(2) Have we any reason to believe that the suffering of the sinner does away with the consequences of the sin in his own soul?

(3) Have we any reason to believe that there is any law in the universe by which suffering is meted out to the sinner in proportion to his sin?

(1) The answer to the first question is, of course, in the negative. A reformed sinner may sometimes do much to make amends in this world, and if he can influence in the immortal life those whom he has injured in this, may, by God's help, more than repay his victims; but it is not by any torment he can endure that he will make good their injuries. He must first be recreated. But how is this to be done? This leads us to our second point.

(2) Do the sinner's torments recreate his own soul, *i.e.* make him good? Certain facts have to be recognised. (*a*) Experience shows that where a character is not specially vicious or criminal but has a tendency either to arrogance or to frivolity, it often happens that a sharp rebuke or penalty acts as a steadying and sobering influence. But this result ensues only when the character is fundamentally sound. It "brings people to their senses," we say—implying truly that the sense is there all the while underneath. (*b*) Yet again, suffering faced cheerfully and heroically undoubtedly ennobles the character; but it cannot be too often emphasised that it is not the suffering itself, but the way in which it is faced, that produces this result. Suffering *per se* does not ennoble or purify; on the contrary, unless it is met in the right spirit it inevitably hardens and degrades. The extent to which suffering elevates is in exact proportion to the original goodness of the character. He of whom it is said that "He was made perfect by suffering" is the same of whom also it is said that He was "without sin." (*c*) Punishment, again—*i.e.* the infliction of suffering as the penalty for wrongdoing, whether by parent, schoolmaster, or magistrate—often has salutary results. But all experience in educational or criminal reform shows that the less there is of penal infliction of pain upon the offender, and the more elevating personal influences can

be brought to bear instead, the more effective the results. Above all, it is found that unless the opprobrium expressed by the infliction of punishment is regarded by the offender as "just"—not perhaps at first, but ultimately—the punishment hardens and degrades instead of elevating. Excessive punishments may, indeed, operate as a deterrent; they may make a particular offence too dangerous to be worth risking; but they cannot produce a change of mind in the offender which makes him cease to desire to commit it or condemn himself for desiring to do so or prevent him doing it when risk of detection seems small. On the contrary, they rather tend to arouse in him moral condemnation of the power which punishes as being merely oppressive. That is to say, they have no moral value. The moral value of punishment depends on the degree to which the individual recognises the punishment as just, that is, as being the expression by the punisher or the community of a moral principle to which he himself assents. But it is the element of good in him, shown by his assent to the principle and the consequent way in which he reacts towards the inflicted pain, not the inflicted pain *per se*, which reforms him. And this is made none the less true by the fact that, in many cases, without some strong reminder of the moral principle and of the disapproval of its infraction by the community, he would have gone on uninterruptedly in his old courses. Fichte well distinguishes between Punishment properly so called and Outlawry, and he argues that the logical treatment of one who offends gravely against the law of the well-being of the community is outlawry, *i.e.* his complete elimination, whether by death or otherwise, from that society. Punishment, on the other hand, is the infliction of something less than outlawry, in the hope that the offender may yet live to conform to the law. Common feeling supports this view; when a criminal is condemned to death the rigours of prison diet and discipline are relaxed; another chance in this life being

denied him, it is felt that further punishment is useless cruelty. So, too, as is argued elsewhere in this volume,[1] if any soul continues to set itself in hostility, in this world and the next, to the Divine goodness, annihilation, not endless torment, seems the only end compatible with justice.

In the interests of society penalties which are purely deterrent, and, in the last resort, complete annihilation, may be justified while society has no better method of moral education. But punishment, in its truest and highest sense, must have in view the possible reclamation of the offender. Reformatory punishment implies that the person punished is a being who *knows* that he has offended against a moral principle. You do not punish a sow who—as occasionally happens—devours her young alive; you do punish a human mother who even neglects her children. Only in so far as the criminal is capable of recognising that he has done wrong—*i.e.* only in so far as there is still alive in him a certain amount of moral insight—is there any likelihood of the penalty having a reformatory effect. The more morally degraded a person is, the less of such moral insight remains, and the more likely is he to regard the penalty as unjust, as being merely the tyrannical infliction of a hostile power, and hence to become a more embittered enemy of society than before. This is true when the soul remembers its wrongdoing; but Karma brings pain to bear on the soul that has forgotten its past, and which, therefore, cannot recognise the sinfulness of its past, and it brings the heaviest pain on the souls who are most degraded. We all recognise that to punish a man who had lost both memory and moral insight would be futile; therefore Karma, in its essence, is not disciplinary or purgative, but vindictive.[2]

[1] Essay V. pp. 216-217.

[2] In justice to their capacity for clear thought it is only fair to notice that in Indian philosophy Karma is frankly thought of as involving punishment of the "vindictive" type. It is only modern interpreters who by reading into it a purgatorial conception have, in order to save its morality, made it logically absurd.

From this analysis of the human theory of punishment we see that while the purely vindictive or retributive theory assumes that Justice with her scales demands an almost mechanically weighed-out equivalent of suffering to expiate so much sin, the application of such a theory to practice leads, not to the decrease of iniquity, but to its increase. This conception of Justice required revision, and in fact it has been revised by a large consensus of modern opinion.

Our answer, then, to the question, Can suffering do away with sin? is in the negative. Sin can only be cancelled—that is to say, its results, in so far as they take the form of the degradation of the soul that sins—can only be wiped out by a change of heart, which, again, only takes place by the conscious experience of a fresh access of love to good or God. The only thing that can do away with moral badness in the soul is something which replaces that moral badness by moral goodness. Only by saving a sinner out of a condition of sin into a condition of active moral goodness can he be saved from the results of sin; only by active beneficence, inspired by divine wisdom, can he counterbalance the harm his sin has done to others. It is therefore only by active goodness, both of God and man—God giving, man responding—that evil can be remedied. A certain form of suffering accompanies all reformation; for repentance implies sorrow for the past, and this often involves very acute suffering. But the essential difference between true repentance and the notion of expiation by mere suffering, is that repentance, with its correlative forgiveness, has in it also an element of refreshment and joy—the joy of a psychic re-creation into a freer and nobler life. When Jesus Christ said of a woman, "Her sins which are many are forgiven her, for she loved much," He clearly taught that the basis of her salvation was not suffering, but the love in the woman's soul for the goodness she saw in the heart of Jesus. We know this to be true in everyday life.

Reformation of character depends on a fresh access of love for goodness, and is the outward aspect of the inward grace of forgiveness; for all goodness is ultimately of God, and God's forgiveness is not the remitting of some arbitrary penalty, but the gift of His good Spirit to the repentant soul. The soul that can go out of itself in love is already on the upward path because it is already joined to God.

(3) Our third question was whether we have reason to believe it to be a law of the universe that the suffering of the sinner is in proportion to his sin. As a matter of fact, so far as we can observe, the results of wrongdoing in human life are not proportionate suffering, but proportionate degradation. Degradation, of course, involves some suffering, but the suffering is most acute in the initial stages of degeneracy. It is certainly not cumulative, nor is it intensified as the man continues the downward path. The blear-eyed, half-paralysed drunkard, who has given up all moral conflict, is very uncomfortable, but is not able to suffer as acutely as he did when he took the first wrong steps; and he does not begin to be capable of the same acute suffering as his innocent and high-minded wife feels on his behalf. Nor is his degeneracy merely that of deadened nerves. He will be found to have become more and more selfish, more and more incapable of recognising the claims of other people in relation to his own. In many cases he becomes egotistical and dishonest, with shorter and shorter intervals of maudlin repentance. This is a case where degeneracy and its accompanying callousness are easily seen; but exactly the same growth of degeneracy and callousness can be traced in any habitually immoral life. No egoist knows that he is one, and so he may complain loudly of the inexplicable loss of friends that his egoism brings him; but though he whine and brood, it is obvious that he becomes hardened to all that makes the acutest suffering of noble souls, just as he becomes callous to their acute

enjoyments. The more a soul becomes enriched, ennobled, and consequently purified, the more it becomes capable of intense delight and intense sorrow; but wrongdoing has a disintegrating effect, not only on the body but the mind. Coarseness, obliquity, brutality, inevitably come in its train, but not anything that deserves to be called intense suffering. True suffering in the sinner appears to be due quite as much to the upward beat of the wing as to the descent; while the greatest suffering must always be experienced by the highest natures, who also are alone capable of the greatest joy.[1]

Again, let us ask ourselves what our innate power of appreciating truth has to say, in the face of fact, to this theory that all suffering is deserved. Can any normally constituted father or mother, seeing a little child in the grasp of some cruel physical disease, believe that the child is expiating some hideous crime? Moreover, how can those who are able to comfort themselves with the conviction that the drab lives and painful privations of the poor are always deserved, ever clearly perceive their own responsibility for righting great social wrongs? Indeed, the doctrine of Karma, which explains that a man is born a Brahman as a reward, or an Outcaste as a punishment, for his deeds in a former life, supplies the Hindu with a moral justification of the system of Caste.

Karma embodies False Notion of Justice

The doctrine of Karma was an advance on what preceded it. The Brahmans who conceived it made a splendid hypothesis and raised a trivial conception of the moral world into grandeur. But their hypothesis has been found inadequate to express the facts. They assumed the "vindictive" theory that in the individual life suffering ought to be proportionate to sin; so that

[1] The subject of sin and suffering is more fully treated in the Essay on "Repentance and Hope" in *Concerning Prayer*.

they added nothing to the explanation given by earlier thinkers of the problem of suffering, they only enlarged the sweep of the still more primitive explanation. Primitive man says that the gods punish the sinner here and now—we see this in the Old Testament; later, he says that they punish him in another world—we see this stage reached in Jewish Apocalyptic; the philosophers of Karma said that in a thousand earthly lives he would be punished. The problem of evil is larger than the problem of suffering; it asks why, if the Power manifested in the universe be good, should any living soul be so constituted and environed that it will choose to do wrong and thus cause suffering? To this the thinkers who conceived of Karma gave no answer, unless it was that the experience of wrongdoing is necessary for the soul's development.

We must respect the real effort this philosophy makes to vindicate the moral government of the universe, though it fails to vindicate it. If the experience of wrongdoing be necessary for the soul's moral growth, how unjust to punish by age-long suffering; if it is not necessary, then this philosophy offers no explanation of the existence of evil. We have seen that suffering neither makes the bad man righteous nor makes good the injury he has done. So that the law of Karma, if it held good, would not point to a moral government of the world.

Intellectually, the strong point of Karma is its insistence on the reign of law in the moral sphere—on the fact that an action inevitably produces its inherent consequences, good if the act be good, evil if the act be evil. But we have discovered that the necessary and inherent consequences of evil action are the degradation or degeneration of the sinner, which lessens his capacity to suffer; and its most usual results are misfortune for the innocent and grief for the noble-minded. Thus we conclude that law does rule in the moral sphere, but that it is not the law set forth by the

doctrine of Karma. These Hindu philosophers failed to see how progress is actually achieved in the moral life. The whole process of progress, as we see it in this life, would need to be reversed to fit into their theory; for in this life the soul progresses when the capacity alike for sorrow and for joy increases, and goes backward as sensibility to either diminishes. The greater part of the pain resulting from sin falls—as the early Hebrews saw—on children's children, *i.e.* on the innocent. It falls also, and with sharpest stroke, on the noblest souls. It is Moses who was agonised by Israel's sin, while the people were satisfied with themselves; and we are sure that Absalom was incapable of the pain which David suffered when he cried, "Would God I had died for thee, my son! my son!"

If the believer in Karma holds that all human suffering is the direct result of the sin of the sufferer, he must frankly hold it on the mere verbal authority of Sages or Adepts, for there is nothing in known fact to corroborate it. But, assuming for the sake of argument that it is true, let us ask if, carefully considered, it really appears just. According to this doctrine the Supreme Being permits fallible beings to be born into this world of temptation with sensuous natures which necessarily lead them at first to place a mistaken value upon sensuous pleasures. If they fall, the universe is such that they incur suffering, and if they do not reform under this suffering in successive lives, it grows more and more severe while they grow less and less able to profit by it. Thus it may be endlessly prolonged. That is the law of Karma, and I submit that, candidly considered, it offends the instinct of justice in any healthy mind that believes in God. The fact that Christian thinkers have often taught as crude and cruel a doctrine of the Divine government of the world does not make the law of Karma, as expounded by Theosophy, more just. It portrays horrible injustice on the part of a Divine Power, who binds fallible men upon the wheel

of time and offers them no escape but by toilsome effort and the fire of suffering, while He Himself holds aloof both from effort and suffering.

Prophets of deeper insight, pondering on the mystery of God and man, came to think that if the God who originated both fallible men and the earth on which they are bound, shared their suffering and offered them the immediate escape of forgiveness and restoration when they fell, exerting His own energy to supply their lack of moral power, and afterwards compensating them with fuller joy, the scheme—although still mysterious—could not be conceived as unjust; for the Supreme Power would be taking the responsibility and sorrow on Himself, and giving to men in the end what would repay their effort and distress. The fact that the noblest souls, capable of the greatest joy, grow also in the power of sorrow, leads us to perceive that sorrow is divine. Such a God we recognise to have been preached by Jesus Christ, and exemplified in His own suffering and death; but we get no hint of this sort of Divine suffering and exertion, or of the offer of immediate escape and of personal care and compensation, in the law of Karma, which offers no real justification for the ways of God to men.

PART II.—MODERN THEOSOPHY

Theosophy as a Religion

The Buddhists accepted the belief in Karma and Metempsychosis from the Brahmans, and it was from Buddhism, to begin with, that the founders of the modern Theosophical Society took these doctrines and preached them in modern Europe. Along with these theories they taught a harmony of all religions, and a path of salvation by which the evolution of the soul toward bliss may be hastened, and other beliefs, chiefly Indian in origin, but partly neo-Platonic.

The success of the Theosophical Society in attracting numbers of pure-hearted and earnest-minded Christians is, I believe, due to two things—(*a*) the emphasis laid upon disinterested love and fellowship, and (*b*) the control over self and circumstances which its disciples often exhibit.

(*a*) The emphasis laid on love and fellowship as the first essential of the spiritual life is far in advance, not of Christian principle, nor of the highest ideal of the Hebrew prophets, but of the bulk of Old Testament righteousness which was, and is, constantly taught in our Sunday Schools and Churches under the name of Christianity. I may confirm this assertion by reference to the value still attached in many circles to the imprecatory Psalms and the widespread opposition to their being omitted from the daily services of the Church, a proposal which has only quite recently gained any concerted support. With regard to the right attitude of mind toward an enemy, the Buddhist doctrine that "hatred ceaseth not by hatred at any time but only by love," teaches a reaction of the virtuous mind against sin probably more effectual and nearer to truth and the mind of Christ than the "righteous anger" so generally exalted as a primary virtue by Western Christianity. The insistence on love to all as necessary to the path of salvation draws saintly minds to Theosophy.

(*b*) Theosophy also teaches as part of the way of salvation, definite habits of auto-suggestion by which certain forms of self-control and control over others are actually obtained. Serenity and helpfulness acquired by a discipline of concentration and contemplation, produce a happiness little known to the average worried and careworn Western mind, and this throws a glamour over Oriental beliefs concerning the life after death which those beliefs, dispassionately considered by themselves, would not possess. One turns from the perusal of certain books written by Theosophists upon

the way of salvation with the conviction that here are ideals of the duties and privileges of life on earth, of the soul's passage through discarnate heavenly states, and of its final goal, very much nobler than the complex of lower Old Testament and Apocalyptic ideals so often set forth as Christianity. It is the bigoted persistence of our religious teachers in perpetuating such lower ideals which is the true cause of most of our modern heresies.

But to dwell on the religious aspect of Theosophy would be irrelevant to our subject, which is the views of Theosophists on the after-life, and in discussing the theories of the after-life set forth by the Theosophical Society it is no part of our work to criticise the circumstances of its foundation or the character of its founder or present leaders. We are concerned only to examine the grounds on which it endorses the Oriental doctrines of the life after death which it is spreading in Christendom.

We have to examine :

(1) Their claim to base their belief on occult knowledge.

(2) The claim of Theosophy to be the nucleus of all religions.

(3) The conception of personality involved in their view.

(1) The Claim to Occult Knowledge

The Claim as made

The Theosophical teachers are not content to speculate ; they assert that they know. William Q. Judge, one of their American founders, says :—

"Theosophy is sometimes called the Wisdom-Religion, because from immemorial time it has had knowledge of all the laws governing the spiritual, the moral, and the material. The theory of nature and of life which it offers is not one that was at first

speculatively laid down and then proved by adjusting facts or conclusions to fit it; but is an explanation of existence, cosmic and individual, derived from knowledge reached by those who have acquired the power to see behind the curtain that hides the operations of nature from the ordinary mind. Such Beings are called Sages, using the term in its highest sense. Of late they have been called Mahâtmâs and Adepts."[1]

Similarly, Mrs. Besant testifies as to the method by which it is possible for Theosophists to discover and reveal the working of the divine mind as seen in the universe :—

"Theosophy accepts the *method* of Science—observation, experiment, arrangement of ascertained facts, induction, hypothesis, deduction, verification, assertion of the discovered truth—but immensely increases its *area*. . . . It has observed that the condition of knowing the physical universe is the possession of a physical body, of which certain parts have been evolved into organs of sense, eyes, ears, etc., through which perception of outside objects is possible. . . . The Theosophist carries on the same principle into higher realms." She goes on: "That there should be other spheres, and other bodies through which those spheres can be known, is no more inherently incredible than that there is a physical sphere, and that there are physical bodies through which we know it. The Occultist — the student of the workings of the divine Mind in Nature —asserts that there are such spheres, and that he has and uses such bodies. The following statements are made as results of investigations carried on in such spheres by the use of such bodies by the writer and other Occultists; we all received the outline from highly developed members of our humanity, and have proved it true step by step, and have filled in many gaps by our own researches. We, therefore, feel that we have the right to affirm, on our own first-hand

[1] *An Epitome of Theosophy*, William Q. Judge, p. 2.

experience—stretching over a period of twenty-three years in one case and twenty-five in another—that super-physical research is practicable, and is as trustworthy as physical research."[1]

It is on the evidence of such experience as this that the Society has reaffirmed the doctrines of Reincarnation and Karma.

It is by this "scientific" method, too, that Theosophists obtain pictures of that life after death to which they are taught to aspire. *E.g.:* after describing the soul's discarnate experiences on the "astral plane," where it sheds emotion and desire, Mrs. Besant tells of the "mental plane":—

"Comparatively few people, at the present stage of evolution, can function freely in the mental world, clothed only in the higher and the mental bodies, separated from the physical and astral. But those who can do so can tell about its phenomena—an important matter, since heaven is a part of the mental world guarded from all unpleasant intrusions. The inhabitants of the world are the higher ranks of nature-spirits, called in the East Devas, or Shining Ones, and by Christians, Hebrews, and Muhammadans Angels—the lowest Order of the angelic Intelligences. These are glowing forms with changing shades of exquisite colours, whose language is colour, whose motion is melody. The heaven-portion of the mental world is filled with discarnate human beings, who work out into mental and moral powers the good experiences they have garnered in their earthly lives. Here the religious devotee is seen, rapt in adoring contemplation of the Divine Form he loved on earth, for God reveals Himself in any form dear to the human heart. . . . Every high activity followed on earth, every noble thought and aspiration, here grow into flowers, flowers which contain within themselves the seeds which shall later be sown on earth. Knowing this, men may in this

[1] *Theosophy*, by Annie Besant, pp. 21-23.

world prepare the seeds of experience which shall flower in heaven."[1]

To any one who can take these extracts *au pied de la lettre* it must be rather a shock to be told that, after a few centuries of this heaven, the soul needs to be re-born on earth.

Hypnoidal States and their Content[2]

The assumption of knowledge, the experience of direct vision of things unknowable by sense and reason —such as described above by Mrs. Besant—has by many critics been met with outward indifference and the tacit accusation of fraud, an accusation at some time or other levelled at all religions. This accusation has never served to condemn a religion with its adherents or to elucidate truth; for, though there is probably fraud and hypocrisy among the teachers of many, perhaps all, religious societies, no such society was ever held together by the mere practice of deceit.

The experience of being "caught up into the third heaven"[3] or of "going out into the astral plane," and of so acquiring supposed knowledge in other planes or spheres of being, is a widespread mental phenomenon. Many men of undoubted good faith have reported such experience; the important point is to study scientifically the nature of the mental states in which such experience occurs. It appears to belong to the phenomena of hypnoidal states. In all religions the attempt to attain enlightenment has been connected with semi-hypnotic states induced by penances or intoxications or the psycho-physical exercises known as "trance-practice." In such states the subject realises a sense of liberty and power unknown to the sober, waking consciousness.[4] In such states suggestions given to him, or self-induced,

[1] *Theosophy*, by Annie Besant, pp. 38-39.

[2] This section should be read in connection with the discussion on "Auto-suggestion and Trance," Essay II. pp. 35-40.

[3] Cf. p. 331.

[4] See Essay II. p. 36.

operate powerfully in his immediate future. In such states also he is subject to dreams[1] that, when afterwards remembered, appear to him to be revelations from an objective source. The "schools of the prophets" in all times and everywhere have been more or less partial to trance-practice. It is an essential part of the "Path" of Indian religion. It is more unwittingly practised in many Christian forms of devotion.

It is desirable to have in mind exactly what is meant by "trance-practice." It is the habit of falling into self-induced hypnoidal conditions of mind, either as an end in themselves, under the belief that the condition is spiritual, or with the deliberate intention of acquiring knowledge or magical power or moral discipline or religious emotion. It is very important to understand that such states of mind are in no way supra-normal. The earlier stages of hypnosis are both natural and wholesome; we are often lulled into them without recognising the fact. It is equally important to recognise clearly that the powers of the human mind which come to light in these, its quiescent, moments—suggestibility, thought-transference, clairvoyance, etc. —are not supernatural but natural, and that the state in itself is no more "spiritual" than the state of rational activity.

Of Hindu trance Professor Poussin says :—

"It was admitted that Man obtains, in semi-hypnotic states, a magical power. The name of a thing is supposed to be either the thing itself or a sort of double of the thing; to master, during trance, the name, is to master the thing. Just as penance, trance became a means to spiritual aims. That is the case with Brahmanism. Trance is the necessary path to the merging of the individual Self into the universal Self. . . . Buddhism teaches in so many words that not every trance is good. A trance which is not aimed at the right end, eradication of desire, is a mundane affair.

[1] See Essay VII. pp. 261-262.

When undertaken with desire, in order to obtain either advantages in this life, namely magical powers, or some special kind of rebirth, trances cannot confer any spiritual advantage. Of course, if they are correctly managed, they succeed, as any other human contrivance would succeed.[1] . . . The intention of the ascetic and his moral preparation make all the difference between mundane and supra-mundane trance." For example, he says: "The monk makes a disk of light red clay. . . . Then the meditation begins; the ecstatic has to look at the disk as long as it is necessary in order to see it with closed eyes, that is, in order to create a mental image of the disk. To realise this aim he must contemplate the disk sometimes with his eyes open, sometimes with his eyes shut, and thus for a hundred times, or for a thousand times, or even more, until the mental image is secured. . . . The mind, once concentrated and strengthened by exercise with the clay disk *or any other exercise of the same kind*,[2] is successively to abandon its content and its categories. The ecstatic starts from a state of contemplation coupled with reasoning and reflection; he abandons desire, sin, distractions, discursiveness, joy, hedonic feeling; he goes beyond any notion of matter, of contact, of difference; . . . finally, he realises the actual disappearance of feeling and notion. It is a lull in the psychical life which coincides with perfect hypnosis."[3]

But there is more to be understood. In our consideration of Spiritualism we saw[4] that the mediumistic condition—which, of course, belongs to trance-practice—does actually carry with it a certain susceptibility to telepathic knowledge, and a certain power of what is often called "clairvoyance." There is good evidence for the actual operation of these powers, which has been carefully recorded and indexed in the *Proceedings*

[1] Much in what is called "New Thought" is illuminated by this.
[2] The italics are mine.
[3] *The Way of Nirvāna*, pp. 160-165.
[4] See Essay VII. p. 262.

of the Society for Psychical Research, and is accessible to all.

There is also some evidence of another power possessed by the mind in an early stage of hypnosis, and that is the power of influencing others who are passive or in some sympathetic personal connection. It was assumed, on *a priori* reasoning, by earlier investigators of telepathy that the agent in the telepathic communication must exercise determined volition while the subject remained passive ; but there is a good deal of evidence to show that the agent also must have entered a state of quiescence, or what is called "the silence of the soul," if he would make his influence effective. An experienced medical woman, not at all religious or infected with mystical notions, once told me that she believed "absent treatment" by mind-healers was in some cases actually effective. She said she had known sudden and unexpected recoveries which had synchronised with the action of an absent healer who worked unknown to the patient. A similar body of evidence comes from Christian Scientists. My point is that in such cases the healer seeks the "inner silence of the soul," and there endeavours to experience the power of God for his patient. The only volition involved is to induce the passive state. In the innumerable veridical cases of apparitions at the time of death there appears little evidence of volition on the part of the dying ; the transference of thought, which no doubt originated the apparition, seems more likely to have taken place when the dying person is sinking, and hence passive.

The Buddhists reckon that there are four distinct phases of rapt meditation. In the first, attention is "directed and sustained." The second is the "inward tranquillising of the mind, self-contained and uplifted from the working of attention" ; this state is "born of concentration." In the third, "through the quenching of zest" man "abides indifferent but also mindful"

of this state it is declared, "he who is indifferent but mindful dwells in happiness." The final state is "pure mindfulness and indifference, wherein is neither happiness nor unhappiness."[1]

In our own language, and from what appears to be the evidence concerning states of quiescence, we may say that the first state is that of intent and pleasant thought upon some special subject. Secondly, from the strain of attention, especially if any outward object of adoration or contemplation is seen or imagined, the mind becomes slightly exhausted, and slips into what may be called inward silence or a cessation of all the inward voices of mind and heart. This state can be achieved by some practice without the previous state of meditation. It is extraordinarily useful as a rest to the harassed mind, and after such a rest the mind may often reap the harvest of its best previous labour. The subject soon becomes incapable of criticising any suggestion that may come, unless it be too deeply antagonistic to be acceptable. This is a stage in which the crystal-gazer sees visions in the crystal, in which the devotee may see unwonted sights or hear voices or experience revelations. It is also the stage which is the parent of hallucination and delusion, because the mind apparently always believes itself to be completely alert, not recognising its hypnoidal state. In any normal condition the rest is very short. If by practice this period can be unduly prolonged, or if the strain of the mind's vision is fixed upon any object too long, a third state ensues which is hypnotic sleep or trance.

We require a far more thorough scientific study than we now have of these natural powers of the mind in quiescent conditions, in order that we may unravel the good and evil strains in trance-practice. It is probable that knowledge of actual facts arising from the natural powers of the mind in hypnotic conditions, and, appearing supernatural, as it must to those who do

[1] *Buddhism*, by Mrs. Rhys Davids, p. 200.

not know its real cause, casts a glamour over the memory of mere hypnotic dreams, making them seem veridical, and throws a false sanctity over objects and beliefs connected with all the milder forms of self-hypnosis.

The key to the problem of discriminating the valuable and the worthless elements in all such "revelations" is to be found in two facts already noted in Essay VII. Firstly, that the general tenor of the content of the mind in any self-induced hypnoidal state is determined by the real, though not always conscious, tenor of the desire and purpose of the self. Secondly, that the telepathic influences from other minds to which it is most susceptible are thoughts or pictures in harmony with that real desire and purpose. Hence the value of the thoughts or visions which rise in the mind in such states depends entirely upon the mental, moral, and aesthetic interests of the subject. They must be tested by their quality, not accepted uncriticised as a revelation from the unseen world. The content of such hypnoidal states as come short of trance is remembered by the subject; hence in spite of the compelling force which attaches to suggestions made in these hypnoidal states (cf. p. 36) the responsibility of their interpretation lies with the reason of the subject. The interpretation of what is said and done in deeper trance lies with the reason of the observers.

The problem of interpretation has been entirely confused by the absurd idea that if the state is due to auto-suggestion, its content must be also. The hypnoidal state is always due either to auto-suggestion, or to hetero-suggestion which is not repelled, or to some degree of physical exhaustion. When the subject of the hypnoidal state is of weak or vagrant mind the content of the self-induced state will be due to any chance suggestion, verbal or telepathic. When the state is entered into with a distinct desire for a certain type of content, the content will again be due to suggestion,

and will have only the value of that suggestion. At the same time, in this state, the poet, the painter, the musician, the discoverer, the thinker, the saint, may sometimes attain the vision which is the crown of their laborious lives, and that vision is a vision of objective reality because truth and beauty and God have objective realities, and the quest for these realities has been the ruling passion of their ordinary life.

We are thus forced to believe that all these hypnoidal mental states—whether of Apocalyptic Seers, Christian Mystics, Theosophical Adepts, or Spiritualist Mediums —however induced, are in themselves negative, and that their content may be expected to reveal objective reality only so far as the life of the subject exhibits an endeavour after such reality. Their content must at all times be rationally criticised.

We have three ways of approaching truth—knowledge of fact, current and historic, the experience of the self or of others ; hard thinking ; and the intuitive vision of quiescent moments. Truth arrived at by such insight must not contradict knowledge attained in these other ways.

Prayer and Ecstasy in Christian Devotion

In petitional or intercessory prayer, the reason is active, the attention alert to the train of thought. But Christian practice sanctions certain devotional methods under the names of meditation, concentration, adoration, and contemplation, which are usually varying degrees of trance-practice—wholesome if held in check by reason, unwholesome if unduly indulged.

Every Catholic priest knows that after people have knelt in adoration for some time before some object which fixes the gaze, the vows or resolutions they then make are likely to be operative ; but he does not know why. Evangelists produce the same effect by the singing of hymns whose words and music are such that

they silence the reason rather than stimulate thought; but they do not understand their own procedure. Part of the psychological explanation is simple: give a suggestion to a busy mind, and it is neglected, as a candle in a light room is unnoticed; but suggestion in a quiescent mind makes a vivid impression, like a search-light suddenly penetrating the subdued landscape of night; or, if we want another illustration, the best food introduced into a full stomach only produces indigestion, while when the stomach is prepared by rest, the same food is received with appetite, easily digested, and produces strength.

A beautiful English girl once told me of a method of meditation which she had been taught—by her vicar, if I remember rightly. She said, "You take the name of the subject you wish to understand—love, or humility, or anything else—you make yourself see just the word with your eyes shut. By and bye you can see each letter outlined in fire; then you get through." There was a note of happy triumph in the word "through." "Through where? Through to what?" I asked. "Through to reality," she said reverently—"after that it is quite different."

In the light of such experience we must ask, What is the value of trance-practice to devotion? It is important to realise that the law of mental rhythm is a law of God, one of those natural laws the breaking of which produces confusion. The inward silence of the mind is as necessary before coming to the conclusion of any train of thought, as rest before any important effort. The natural summing up of the mind's insight which seems to come almost automatically after such inward silence, will combine the fruit of the more immediate work and the tenor of the whole mental life. The Divine Spirit, who is always, everywhere, seeking to enhance man's powers and attract him toward truth, undoubtedly sustains the mind in its rest and consequent strength. At such an hour God is not nearer

than at any other, nor the voice of truth more personally directed to the soul; but man by conformity to nature's rhythm is better able to exercise his innate power of appreciating truth. Because this is true whatever the subject of thought, it is true also in devotional thought. Because it is true of all intuitions, it is certainly true of religious intuitions. In all cases the value of the experience is the value of the aspirations or desires or efforts of the mind that has the experience. This would still be true although, as appears to be the case, the soul at such times is liable to be reinforced by telepathic influence. What the mind receives by telepathy from other minds will be only such moods or wordless thoughts as are of the texture of its own habits of thought.

Again, we have seen that the content of the mind in any self-induced, hypnoidal states, and the influence from without to which it is susceptible, are largely determined by the purpose which was dominant in inducing the state. If the purpose of prayer is communion with a Being who is all goodness and all love, this cannot but exercise a favourable influence on the content of the mind. On the other hand, prayer to a God conceived of as petty or vindictive is liable to have the worst results—a reflection which shows that idolatry is indeed the worst of sins, for idolatry does not consist in making images of wood or stone, but in holding the unworthy conceptions of God which are usually embodied in such images.

But while the godly soul is thus not in danger from hypnoidal states as such, danger certainly arises from misinterpretation. Because a laborious and noble mind discovers truth in the inner silence, mere emptiness of mind is often held to be a door to God's secret place: objects used to concentrate gaze and thought come to be regarded as possessing in themselves divine power; visions seen in crystals, in convent cells, or in dim chancels, are thought objective, and dream voices that arise in the soul are taken for revelations from another

world. The subject is too large to be more than touched on here.

While prayer is essential in the teaching of Jesus, trance-ecstasy is not, in His teaching, either the test of true prayer or its culmination. Experiences of the deepest trance are very rare in the lives of men who have brought great enlightenment to the world in any direction. When they occur unsought in the lives of men whose aspirations are set upon truth and righteousness and who, like St. Paul, are habitually using all their faculties in the service of these, mistakes concerning their nature can do no harm. They may well bring into consciousness conclusions that are a true revelation, because they have been ripening in a sober and active mind, inspired in all its operations by the spirit of truth.

But—and this is the point with which this paper is concerned—the spectacular or verbal content of the state arises from the subject's own mentality, and the visions seen or words heard cannot be accepted as a source of accurate information about the unseen world.[1]

Barrenness of Trance-Experience

The unprofitableness of the pursuit of such experiences is confirmed by the fact that in communities where trance is most prized and encouraged there has been for centuries least contribution to the world's thought and least improvement in its manners and customs.

Several modern Hindu writers, who have no leanings

[1] In regard to the memory of trance-dreams induced by suggestion, and to the persistent vision of auras claimed by many Theosophists, I would quote the testimony of a scientific hypnotist of experience: "It is perfectly possible, and is indeed quite customary, for one in a hypnotic trance to remember afterwards all that happened in the trance. As for the colour aura, to find out how it may be visualised, I hypnotised a patient and told him that after he wakened he would think my uniform was green. After he got up I asked him, 'What is the colour of my uniform?' He said, 'Green.'" In this case the patient after an interval, having the real uniform before his eyes, was able to give the correct colour. But the self-hypnotised Theosophist has no such real object by which to correct the suggestion if ever a colour aura becomes associated in his mind with a particular person.

towards Western religion, are waking up to the fact that the assiduous trance-practices of the Hindu are inimical to the acquirement of truth. Thus Professor Har Dayal (in the *Modern Review*, July 1912)[1] says :—

"India has hundreds of really sincere and aspiring young men and women, who are free from all taint of greed or worldliness, but they are altogether useless for any purpose that one may appreciate. . . . 'Samadhi' or trance is regarded as the acme of spiritual progress! . . . To look upon an abnormal psychological condition produced by artificial means as the sign of enlightenment was a folly reserved for Indian philosophers."

The experience called by Mrs. Besant, "going out into the astral plane to acquire knowledge," is well described by Dr. Jacks in the words of a character drawn true to life as we know it :—

"Well, I've often done it, and many's the story I could tell of things I've seen by day and night; but it wasn't till I went to hear Sir Robert Ball as the grand idea came to me. 'Why not throw yerself into the stars, Bob?' I sez to myself. And, by gum, sir, I did it that very night. How I did it I don't know; I won't say as there weren't a drop of drink in it; but the minute I'd *got through*, I felt as I'd stretched out wonderful, and blessed if I didn't find myself standin' wi' millions of other spirits, right in the middle o' Saturn's rings. And the things I see there I couldn't tell you, no, not if you was to give me a thousand pounds. Talk o' spirits! I tell you there was millions on 'em! And the lights and the colours—oh, but it's no good talkin'! I looked back and wanted to know where the earth was, and there I see it, dwindled to a speck o' light."[2]

Here we discern three elements in the experience —the practice of some form of self-hypnotism by a man who did not accurately know how he did it; the

[1] Quoted by Dr. Farquhar in *The Crown of Hinduism*, p. 37.
[2] Writings by L. P. Jacks, vol. i. *Mad Shepherds*, pp. 32-33.

suggestion derived from an absorbing lecture by Sir R. Ball; and the memory of a dream that appears veridical but added nothing to the store of the world's knowledge.

Thus, Theosophy comes to us as a rampant occultism, setting the seal of occult "knowledge" upon its teaching of the after-life. In its "illumination" I can find no idea that has not long been current. The very phrases and notions seem to come straight from Oriental or neo-Platonic literature, or from modern, but not the latest, philosophy and science. It is the profession of its teachers that all the truth they teach has always been in the possession of the world-sages; they therefore admit that it makes no original contribution.

(2) Doctrine of the Common Origin of all Religions

We are now in a position to criticise the occult or trance-acquired knowledge of the Theosophists as to the essentials of religion. I have read five primers or manuals of Theosophy. They all insist that the essentials of all religions are the same, since they have been revealed through Adepts or Mahatmas, appearing from time to time as Prophets or Founders of the Historic Religions, but all teaching the one Universal Religion. But a very little real knowledge of actual religious systems, *e.g.* of Old Testament Jahvehism and Buddhism, shows that it is just in essentials that they differ most—in their conceptions of God, and in their beliefs concerning the origin and goal of man and concerning the nature of goodness. The idea of an original Universal Religion, the parent of all existing religions, was once plausible, but it has been completely exploded by the scientific study of Comparative Religion.

"The body of doctrine," says Mrs. Besant, "is obtained by separating the beliefs common to all religions from the peculiarities, specialities, rites, ceremonies, and customs which mark off one religion from another;

it presents these common truths as a consensus of world-beliefs, forming, in their entirety, the Wisdom Religion, or the Universal Religion, the source from which all separate religions spring, the trunk of the Tree of Life from which they all branch forth. . . . The community of religious teachings, ethics, stories, symbols, ceremonies, and even the traces of these among savages, arose from the derivation of all religions from a common centre, from a Brotherhood of Divine Men, which sent out one of its members into the world from time to time to found a new religion, containing the same essential verities as its predecessors, but varying in form with the needs of the time, and with the capacities of the people to whom the Messenger was sent. . . . Comparative Mythology cannot bring one single proof from history of a religion that has evolved from savagery into spirituality and philosophy; its hypothesis is disproved by history. The Theosophical view is now so widely accepted that people do not realise how triumphant was the opposing theory, when Theosophy again rode into the arena of the world's thought in 1875, mounted on its new steed, the Theosophical Society."[1]

We cannot accept this view. The following passage by Mr. C. C. J. Webb will suffice to explain both its origin and why it must be regarded as obsolete :—

"When the distinction between Natural and Revealed Religion was most in vogue, some would frankly regard Natural Religion as that religion the truth of whose tenets was sure and certain, as the general agreement upon them indicated. . . . The difficulty which thus confronted those who maintained the value of the special doctrines of their own religion could not be adequately met with the help of an abstract Logic untouched by the theory of development, which took little account in dealing with other peoples and other ages of the different intellectual

[1] *Theosophy*, pp. 12, 14-16.

contexts in which their statements were made, and scarcely conceived of any relation between the different doctrines which obtained in different periods or among different nations, except the relations of agreement or disagreement. With such a logic it was only possible, if one held to the truth of the doctrines of one's own religion, either to suppose all other doctrines simply false, a view difficult for men of culture who were aware how much they themselves and their religion owed to the believers and teachers of other religions; or to suppose that one and the same esoteric doctrine (whether traceable or no to one primeval 'revelation') had been taught unchanged in divers religions under different phraseology. This last view does not now recommend itself to scholars or scientific theologians, but it has still great attractions for many who have enjoyed only a general and unsystematic education, as the success of the Theosophical Society and of kindred movements sufficiently proves; and in a former age it was entertained by men who stood in the first rank of the learning and science of their day. Without going back to the attempts of ancient thinkers like Philo to find Platonism in the Old Testament, and the like efforts of later theologians and philosophers, a notion of this sort is the leading principle in a work of vast learning and deep thought, the production of which conferred honour on Cambridge and England in the seventeenth century, Cudworth's *Intellectual System of the Universe*; and we may find a lingering echo of this way of thinking in the late Mr. Gladstone's discussion of Homeric religion in his *Juventus Mundi*. . . . To advance further, it was necessary to introduce the conception of development. . . . We have also come to think it less profitable to study under the name of 'natural religion' a religion reached by abstracting from each religion what is peculiar to it and retaining only what is common, a religion therefore which never really exists as the religion of any nation

or people. We think it better to try to understand a real actual religion, one which has grown up with the natural development of a people's mind, to seek to discover why it has just the peculiarities which it has, why in these particular respects it has departed from some older religious system which may have preceded it, or has opposed itself to the religious systems which confront it in the same or neighbouring lands."[1]

If what Mrs. Besant puts forth as the central tenet of Theosophy, endorsed by her occult investigations, has no basis in the facts as now more clearly elucidated by the comparative study of religions, the authority of the Theosophical Society as an exponent of occult truth concerning the future life must be shaken.

(3) The Conception of Personality

The third point in which Theosophist teaching seems to fail is with regard to the conception of personality.

There is in the teaching of the greater prophets and psalmists of the Old Testament, in the teaching and example of Jesus Christ, and in much of the religious experience recorded in the New Testament, a conception of the relation of God and man that commands our acceptance by its moral beauty, and that, by its splendour and tenderness, causes the beliefs in Reincarnation and Karma to appear tawdry and trivial. The main objection to these doctrines is that they belittle personality, and that in three ways: (1) The view of a thread of psychic life on which different earthly lives could be strung, like beads on a string, is an abstraction of thought: the minimum or life principle common to a hundred or a thousand lives does not constitute personality. (2) A continuous memory is not held to be necessary to life progress; but we are to ourselves and to our friends only what memory makes us. (3) Under the law of Karma men are supposed to be

[1] *The Notion of Revelation*, C. C. J. Webb, pp. 6-8.

punished cruelly for wrongs they do not know they have committed ; this would be seen to be an outrage upon dignity and freedom if God, or fate, was conceived as respecting man's personality. When personality is accepted as the standard of value, and exalted as an attribute of God, the belief that the human soul in its aeonian pilgrimage casts off a hundred different personalities, each like a soiled garment, becomes profane.

The nature of personality has always been a difficulty to the philosopher. It will not lend itself to abstraction. The moment it is conceived of as cut up into will and emotion and intellect, into soul, mind, and spirit, or into any other division, that moment it ceases to exist for the mind who thus conceives it. The conception becomes at once a misconception, useful for certain purposes of dialectic, but representing nothing real. The trend of modern philosophy is, in spite of all difficulties, to emphasise personality as central to the thought of reality. But personality only exists for man *qua* father or son or brother or friend ; the philosopher, unless he hold fast to his experience of friendship as a basis for his search for reality, will not succeed in retaining personality for man.

In Hindu religion, where the more primitive and now obsolescent philosophic conceptions of the Brahmans became dominant, friendship is belittled by asceticism, personality becomes a thing of nought ; or perhaps because personality is belittled by ascetical thought, friendship is not valued. Disgust for life is esteemed holiness. This is a natural result, for human love—motherly, brotherly, and friendly—is the only salt which keeps life wholesome and ever fragrant.

There are many things at which a philosophy must necessarily stumble if it proceeds by processes of analysis and abstraction—the freedom of the human will ; the knowledge of God ; problems of the one and the many, the finite and the infinite. There are things that the human mind knows in their entirety and knows

directly—that is, as soon as it becomes aware of them it knows that they are real. Personality is reality for the soul. Love is seen to inhere in persons and to be possible only because of individuals. God is known to be real through His personality ; and other problems, insoluble through any other conception of reality, are through this one made more easy. The soul that admits its knowledge of the distinction between persons, knows also that the unity of homogeneity, even if infinite, is something far lower than the possible harmony of differentiation. The soul, even in childhood, knows these things. To the Hindu sage, to the Greek philosopher, the Hebrew prophets were like unreflecting children ; but to us, on the contrary, it is clear that their thought, being based on an intuitive perception of personality as the fundamental quality of ultimate reality, really went further and deeper.

It is curious to note how little time and place alter this vision of the soul that has its first true religious experience, and brings forth its criterion of personality as the test of reality. In this matter deep answers to deep across some twenty-five or twenty-seven centuries, and we see moderns like Mr. Wells making, by a personal experience of religion, the same discoveries as were made by the Hebrew prophets. The more we study the purer strain of Hebrew religion the more we realise how close it is to the purer strain in, *e.g.*, Mr. Wells's conception of religion. In both we have the insistence upon God as a veritable person ; both look to personality at its highest for the character of God. Thus, the prophets assert that God loathes blood-reeking altars, and loves kindness and truth ; and Mr. Wells cries, "God fights against death in every form . . . against the petty death of indolence, insufficiency, baseness, misconception, and perversion."[1] Both insist that our knowledge of God comes from direct personal friendship with Him. "The Lord is my shepherd . . .

[1] *God the Invisible King*, p. 118.

He leads me . . . He restores my soul."[1] "I sought the Lord and he heard me."[2] "God comes. . . . It is like standing side by side with and touching some one that we love very dearly and trust completely."[3] Both, having direct knowledge of God, are comparatively indifferent to any complete philosophy of the universe or any definite conception of the after-life. I am not setting Mr. Wells and the makers of all that was best in the Hebrew religion on a level; I am simply showing that where there is the true religious experience, even in those who are agnostic concerning the after-life and the Divine omnipotence, there is the uplifting of human personality into the heavens, and the certainty that it is men as persons that God personally loves. If the abiding part of man is, as the doctrine of Reincarnation affirms, not man at all but a mere principle of life that may manifest itself on earth as first a mouse and then a lion, a cannibal, a squaw, a warrior, a philosopher, a Christian monk, a Buddhist ascetic, his God will also be a mere principle of life, something we cannot now know and love. The test of reality and the whole standard of value changes and becomes "as moonlight unto sunlight, as water unto wine"; instead of confidence we get fear, asceticism instead of fulness of life, benevolence in place of friendship.

Again, how mean and dreary to us appears the individualistic belief that each soul must suffer only for its own sins, never for those of others, expiating all its own sins to the uttermost through innumerable suffering lives without God's interposition. To find a faith with nobler appeal we need not turn to the tender experience and reasoning of Jesus Christ; we find in Hebrew literature, from the eighth century B.C. onward, a faith concerning God's interposition on man's behalf which convinces us of its truth because we all know that we are most nearly divine when we can bear the burdens

[1] Psa. xxiii. [2] Psa. xxxiv. 4.
[3] *God the Invisible King*, p. 27.

which others have incurred, and relieve them of their sin's ill consequence, while we help to restore their moral insight and strength.

The following passage is from an unpublished lecture by Professor Kennett :—

"This brings me to that characteristic of the Old Testament for which it will be valued so long as men are seeking after God. In the Hebrew Scriptures we have the language of perfect faith . . . a certainty that there is no wrong which God will not redress, no social or political sore too inveterate for His healing touch, no sorrow which He cannot comfort. To quote in length is impossible, for the Psalms and prophetic books must needs be quoted almost *in extenso*. It is enough to suggest such utterances as these: 'God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble; therefore will not we fear.'[1] And this: 'He hath swallowed up death for ever, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces, and the reproach of His people shall He take away from off all the earth.'"[2]

Again, we get the faith reiterated—as over against the conception of human expiation and expiatory sacrifice—that it is at cost to Himself that God saves. "In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them."[3] "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins; return unto me, for I have redeemed thee."[4]

Just as in the Old Testament religion we see a constant struggle going on between the sacrificial cults whose morality tended always to inhibitions and ritual exactions, and the prophetic conception which made friendship with God the criterion both of religion and ethics, so in Christianity we see the same struggle going forward; but in Christianity a third combatant has been added, who takes sides with the sacrificial cults, *i.e.*, the Oriental monastic disciplines which had come into

[1] Psa. xlvi.
[2] Isa. xxv. 8.
[3] Isa. lxiii. 9.
[4] Isa. xliv. 22.

Europe through Egypt. Although, as I have said, much teaching called Christian about Retribution—in this life or the next—is on a lower level than the doctrine of Karma, and some elements in our "religious" disciplines and devotional practice are merely on a level with Oriental monasticism, there is, in what is essentially Christian, a religion much higher than anything to be found in Hindu philosophy or in Theosophic teaching.

The keynote of Christianity is personality. Companionship with Jesus teaches us that the open-eyed friendship with God which prophets and psalmists sought, is the way even to returning sinners and to little children. Prayer becomes reasonable and confident and constant, because the child's instinctive knowledge of the reality of personal contacts is seen to be the entrance to, or basis of, the heavenly wisdom, the true philosophy. Notions of infinitude and omnipotence are seen to be mere pale reflections of truth until they are translated into the terms of personal Love. The power of true majesty is seen to be attraction, not compulsion, and hence the only remedy for sin is the influx of the Divine Spirit of love into the soul. In the sunburst of Christian friendship with God and man, the doctrines of impersonal spirit and of the expiation of sin by the suffering of the sinner are shadows that flee away.

IX

THE UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"PRO CHRISTO ET ECCLESIA"

(LILY DOUGALL)

SYNOPSIS

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The trend of biological progress, and the fact that the ideal community is only realised through more complete individuality, suggest that the second is the truer conception of the goal.

IX

THE UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY

I. The Sting of Death

"O Death, where is thy sting!" St. Paul made this exclamation in exaltation of spirit when writing in passionate, poetic joy of the Christian doctrine of the Resurrection. But is the fear of the grave vanquished? Has death no sting? We shut it out of our minds, and busy ourselves with other thoughts. We hypnotise ourselves with religious or philosophic maxims which we mistake for insipid truisms until we find ourselves face to face with the contrasting realities of life and death; then how many of us can feel St. Paul's thrill of triumph?

In the heart of Christendom, a thousand years after St. Paul's martyrdom, we come upon miracle and mystery plays better calculated to instil the terror of death than the peace of God. Sometimes they rise to the level of real poetry which comes from the heart.

Mors execrabilis!
Mors detestabilis!
Mors mihi flebilis!
Fratris interitus
Gravis et subitus
Est causa gemitus.

Thus sings Martha at the death of Lazarus, and the chorus of consoling Jews answers :—

Non per tales lacrimas
Visum fuit animas
Redisse corporibus.
Cessent ergo lacrimae
Quae defunctis minime
Proderunt hominibus.

But there is nothing in the latter part of the play that comes home to the common heart as this does. Although one would expect the Christian triumph to come with poetic conviction, there is no later verse that rings with the energy and poignancy of this opening.

When the truths of Christianity had for several centuries been taught to the people by such plays, by sermons and services in the splendid churches that were built in every locality, by instruction from populous convents and monasteries which stood in almost every fertile vale, how stood the mind of the common people concerning death? If death for them had lost its sting, confidence in the life after death would by Shakespeare's time have become a common sentiment. It would have been taught to little children in those household maxims which become the warp of thought of which after-experience is but the woof-thread. Had Christian joy in the life after death been the common attitude, Shakespeare must have put it into the mouth of many dramatic characters. But this triumph of faith is not echoed from play to play as some other serious sentiments of even a more recondite nature are echoed. The confidence that a good conscience gives in battle, the superiority of mercy to retributive justice, are thus echoed; but the attitude of man toward death—what is it?

We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.
The Tempest, Act IV. Sc. 1.

Ay, but to die, and go we know not where.
Measure for Measure, Act III. Sc. 1.

The weariest and most loathed worldly life
That age, ache, penury, and imprisonment
Can lay on nature, is a paradise
To what we fear of death.

Ibid.

. . . the dread of something after death,
The undiscover'd country. . . .

Hamlet, Act III. Sc. 1.

. . . all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. . . .
Life's but a walking shadow.

Macbeth, Act V. Sc. v.

A century of Protestantism does not seem to have much altered the attitude of mind towards death. In *The New England Primer for Children*, published in 1737 we get,

Our days begin with trouble here,
Our life is but a span,
And cruel death is always near,
So frail a thing is man.

When Steele in *The Tatler* writes a paper on "Sad Memories," it is of one bereavement after another that he writes, and there is no suggestion of resurrection. The first was his father's death :—

"I remember I went into the room where his body lay, and my mother sat weeping alone by it. I had my battledore in my hand, and fell a-beating the coffin, and calling papa ; for, I know not how, I had some slight idea that he was locked up there. My mother catched me in her arms, and, transported beyond all patience of the silent grief she was before in, she almost smothered me in her embraces ; and told me in a flood of tears, 'Papa could not hear me, and would play with me no more, for they were going to put him underground, whence he could *never* come to us again.' She was a very beautiful woman, of a noble spirit, and there was a dignity in her grief amidst all the wildness of her transport ; which, methought, struck me with

an instinct of sorrow, that, before I was sensible of what it was to grieve, seized my very soul."

And if we turn to the last optimistic century, and the most popular poet of the most optimistic of nations, we are told that :—

> The air is full of farewells to the dying,
> And mournings for the dead.

And this even in the same set of verses in which he assures us :—

> There is no death ! What seems so is transition.
> LONGFELLOW, "Resignation."

Of all Tennyson's poetry, the first part of "In Memoriam," which voices passionate grief, is the truest poetry. It is here alone that he reaches that region in which poetry unerringly reveals to men their own thoughts and emotions. The later part of the poem contains a metaphysical argument that falls below the level of much of his other verse, wanting the touch of reality.

How varied are the sentiments we hear read at the burial of the dead ! No one can say that the sting of the unknown or the sorrow of bereavement is removed by the teaching of that service. Contrast the misery of Psalm xxxix. with the triumphant expression of St. Paul's faith in 1 Cor. xv. ; and the committal sentences, "In the midst of life we are in death : of whom may we seek succour, but of thee, O Lord, who for our sins art justly displeased . . . deliver us not into the bitter pains of eternal death," with the expression of the "sure and certain hope" which follows. The misery obliterates any certainty of hope. It is quite impossible that, if the soul of the common people were really and habitually rejoicing in the victory over death, the service could remain in use as it now is in the Book of Common Prayer. The sting of death remains. Much as we wish to determinedly claim that genuine

Christianity overcomes all uneasiness in face of the unknown, solaces all passionate grief, we can only truthfully assert that for certain favoured souls it does; and it is because they have discovered for themselves some assurance, some certainty, some glimpse into the beauty of the unseen, that is not the possession of the majority. The average friendship or domestic tie does not long survive death. It is forgotten, and the heart becomes apathetic to it, because there is no vivid sense that the friend in the unseen is still the same and can still remember. In quiet hours memories of the lost recur, and "never again" rings through the soul in thoughts that lie too deep for tears. Neither the Christian Catholicism of the first fifteen hundred years, nor the Christian Protestantism of the last five hundred years, nor Atheism, nor Agnosticism, nor any form of free thought has given to the common sensitive man in the common street or the common field, lightness of heart concerning the death of his beloved or in face of his own certain end.

This condition ought not to continue. If Christianity is to be justified Christians must attain to a new outlook upon the country beyond the grave.

II. The Revival of Interest in the Future Life

The cause of our lack of confidence in face of death is ignorance. The cause of our ignorance is largely that we have not sought importunately to know more than we do of the soul's further pilgrimage and its goal. Until recently the majority have accepted as final, unsatisfying traditions concerning the nature of the future life which the enlightened minority have declared to be discredited. No one enquires into matters that are thought to be finally settled, or that are not worth knowing. But for the last three-quarters of a century a change has been coming over religious thought. Any long-established religion is liable to be

conservative and slow to move, and the (to us) curious lack of interest shown by the Christianity of the last few centuries in the future life is in harmony with the fact that its accredited teachers, until quite lately, discouraged all speculative thought on the subject. But this lack of interest was quite genuine in the common mind, and was not imposed by religious dogma; rather, the dogma was the result of previous lack of interest. No one will accuse the philosophers or poets of the nineteenth century of slavery to dogmatism, yet their lack of interest in this subject is obvious. We give only two illustrations out of many. Dr. McTaggart[1] discusses the fact that "Hegel treats at great length of the nature, the duties, the hopes, of human society, without paying the least attention to his own belief that, for each of the men who compose that society, life in it is but an infinitesimal fragment of his whole existence, a fragment which can have no meaning except in its relation to the whole"; and Dr. McTaggart asks, "Can we believe he really held a doctrine which he neglected in this manner?" He goes on to show that Hegel's honesty and the explicit statements of his belief in immortality prove he did hold it, and adds: "The real explanation, I think, must be found elsewhere. The fact is that Hegel does not seem much interested in the question of immortality," and proves this by showing that, while he held the doctrine he made no use of it. Observe, again, the obvious lack of interest in the conditions of the after-life in Wordsworth's "Ode," written confessedly on "Immortality," and contrast this with Tennyson's eager speculations on the future.

This interest, growing for fifty years, has now become acute and all but universal. A vast death-dealing conflict of nations has stung both the world and the Church into consciousness of their former apathy.

[1] *Studies in Hegelian Cosmology*, p. 5.

In other regions of knowledge the desire for truth, and lively speculation upon a problem, have always preceded discovery ; and if we believe that all truth is of God we must believe all desire for it to be inspired by Him, and that persistent effort in its quest never exists without the co-operation of the Divine Spirit, and is therefore bound to succeed. We may well believe this even though truth, when found, be long sneered at or neglected or even utilised by some for bad purposes, for it is the law of our life that all good things may by man's free choice be either neglected or abused. If we look back through history we shall see that it is the seeking communities that have found, and that to those who in divine discontent have hammered on the door of truth that door has opened. It was because the Greek sought after wisdom and beauty that his nation created the intellectual and aesthetic tradition of Europe ; it was because there was always left a " seven thousand in Israel " who sought first after righteousness and the knowledge of God that the Christ was born a Jew.

If this be so, we have now every encouragement to hope that we shall receive new enlightenment with regard to the future life if we seek it in the right way.

We have seen that some expect to obtain scientific certainty as to the survival of departed friends through the channels of psychical research. But even if this were obtained, it would be merely a bald fact that would at best only bring reasonable conviction of exactly what was proved and no more. It would also rouse in us a thousand more disquieting questions.

What we need in this matter is the sort of satisfying knowledge that cannot receive scientific proof, but is none the less assured for that. In this life we know that our friends will continue to love us ; we know that Truth and Beauty have objective reality—that they exist independently of us and that we shall learn more and more of them. But this knowledge is not based on

the empirical evidence with which science deals. Yet how certain we are of these things, what deep joy these certainties give!

It is this sort of intuitive certainty that we want to acquire concerning the continuance of the soul after death with unimpaired powers and personal distinction. We wish to know that life after death is an enterprise continuous with this, an enterprise bringing ever-increasing powers of character, ever-increasing discoveries of truth and beauty and love, ever-increasing diversity of experience and consequently of personality. Now all this is for us included in the conception of increasing knowledge of God, in the approach to the direct vision of God, in our conception of life in Him. We can argue about this conception of the next life; we can convince ourselves in certain hours that it must be so; but we want to have the assurance of it, the unquestioning realisation of it; just as we have the unquestioning realisation, in earthly things, of the objectiveness of beauty, or of the loyalty of love, or, in things of religion, that God, of whom we are conscious, is friendly to us and to all mankind.

III. The Path towards Discovery

But how are we to attain to this unquestioning conviction?

I believe that God will give us assurance concerning the life after death if we seek it by confidence of prayer and by travail of thought. This means that four things are required—prayer rightly understood; a living theology; a truer interpretation of experience; and a consideration of the goal of our existence.

Prayer

First, we need prayer; but it must be the prayer of faith. Most of us have little faith in prayer.

We fix our minds on something we want to get from God, or on the hope for instruction about something we want to do. We picture to ourselves the thing we ask. We ask for it first with complete expectation that we shall have what we picture; then, when the answer tarries, with entreaty and some persistence. We may not get what we have pictured to ourselves; then we are discouraged. What child has not gone through this experience? After that come explanations from religious teachers, by which the things which Jesus said about prayer are explained away. Some teachers tell us that we shall seldom get what we want, but that we must go on praying because it is a duty, and God will give us spiritual endowments by which we can successfully meet the lack of those good things for which we ask Him. They also explain that even such dutiful prayer is only to be offered according to certain elaborate conditions of self-abasement. At this explanation those who have made childlike prayers divide into three classes. The first class turn away, for they feel that they have been offered a stone for bread; or, if they continue to pray, they seek vaguely for a good they do not attempt to picture, and in their habits of prayer they do not lay hold of God for any special purpose. The second class make a habit of repeating definite prayers without expecting much result. They have not the faith that will bring light to the world. The third, and much the smallest class, give themselves to realising the conditions laid down, and praying with ardour and expectation for what they believe to be purely spiritual gifts, but in doing so they seek to belittle human spontaneity and natural affection.

I do not think that such explanations are true or right. What Jesus taught about prayer is meaningless if what God sees to be good for us is usually the thwarting of our natural wishes. God is more than able to give Himself with every gift we ask for, so that

each gift becomes a sacrament of His grace. Prayer that has not the momentum of impulse and spontaneous desire, and does not leap forward with the hope of gratification, will never attain its full growth, or serve us in such hours of the world's need as we experience to-day. The reason that we do not get what we expect when we pray is that our expectation of future circumstances is always fallacious. When men set aside all natural desire, and pray for some spiritual benefit for themselves, or others, or for the world, they do not get what they definitely expect any more than in simpler prayers for other delights. And if we turn at any point to the process of life, and look at it with candid eyes, we shall see that the end which any one proposes as the result of a course of action is very different from the end he achieves; and this is most true when the course of action is most successful. If any of us look back to our own childhood or youth, and can remember the vivid pictures we often painted for ourselves of future joys, together with the reality that happened along the line of our expectation, we shall see how different was the real joy from the imaginary, even when quite satisfying. We shall realise that the mental picture was more often than not tawdry and artificial. Memory is short; we are not conscious of any feeling of disappointment when we enjoy something quite different from what we anticipated. But if our mind remained fixed on our first expectations, we should always be disappointed. It is true of life generally that the eye of the mind hath not seen, nor the ear of the mind heard, the things that the future has really in store. But in prayer our expectations, because of repetition, remain more fixed, and we expect a speedy realisation, an artificial notion of Divine omnipotence rendering us unreasonable. A mother, if omnipotent, would not give her child what it cries for when it cries for the moon; she would give it a yellow ball, for that is what it really wants.

The important truth—the real explanation of disappointment in prayer—is that what we picture in our mood of hope is seldom what we should hope for if we understood our real desires. A child cries for a complex and difficult toy ; but what he wants is the sort of pleasure the toy would give if he were mature enough to take care of it and understand how to work it. The pleasure he desires can only be given through another plaything. A man pictures himself as happy with a certain woman for his wife, but what he really wants is a mated happiness which might or might not be possible with her. Or if it is merely mated happiness he pictures, he may want other things more which would be incompatible with it. And so with all the round of life : God could not give us what we want if He gave us what we think we want. So in prayer : there is no evidence that the good we really want when we pray, is not given to us just as quickly as it is possible for us to assimilate it to our other benefits and enjoy it. Faith realises that we live and move and have our being in the love of God, just as a long-wished-for babe lives and moves and has its being in its parents' love. It is impossible for us to turn the attention of our souls toward God without receiving, when burdened with any desire, the gratification of the desire. That is what Jesus said, and it is absolutely and unreservedly true. But we must realise that in prayer, as in every other aspect of our life, we have consciously but a dim knowledge of the end we have in view. In the ordinary affairs of life, if we form no picture of the ends we have in view, and seek not to attain them, we shall become futile. So in prayer some definite picture of what we want is necessary, even though we recognise that the picture may have but a distant likeness to what we really and whole-heartedly desire.

It is only when we realise that prayer never fails that we can have faith. It is because prayer never

fails that we should betake ourselves to prayer, when we feel the burden of ignorance about the undiscovered country beyond the grave. What do we want when we are in this sorrow? We want to know that those who were so kind and attractive and pleasant when with us are alive and well and making good progress in another country; that no loss of memory or comprehension separates their minds from ours; that when we go to them they will still be the same to us, but better off for the experiences of the years of separation. We do not dress in black, or subdue our laughter because a son or father, a daughter or friend, has gone to fill some good appointment in a far land, where we conceive that love and character and fortune may mature before we clasp hands with them again. It is this that we want to know about our dead. Let us, then, take our wants passionately to God, assured that He will give us, not any detailed pieces of information, but something more and better than we can ask or think. He will give us increasing knowledge of Himself, and, included in that, increasing knowledge of our dead.

A Living Theology

The great Christian theologians, each in his own day, pushed forward the faith by their whole individual might of intellectual travail. They have left us a splendid heritage. But when Christian theology becomes traditionalism and men fail to hold and use it as they do a living language, it becomes an obstacle, not a help to religious conviction. To the greatest of the early Fathers and the great scholastics theology was a language which, like all language, had a grammar and a vocabulary from the past, but which they used to express all the knowledge and experience of their own time as well. They enlarged its vocabulary; they modified its grammar. But in this particular of helping the common man to rejoice in the sure knowledge of

the immortal life, their lack of knowledge—*e.g.* of the origin of the Apocalyptic imagery—hampered them, and they had only a very partial success. And yet it is probable that in their time the ordinary, unlearned Christian, with the priest at his bedside, felt more complacency as to the death of his dear ones or of himself than did his heathen forefathers. But since Thomas Aquinas wrote his *Summa* a world of new knowledge has swum into our ken; and the traditionalism which refuses to assimilate this into the splendid structure of Christian theology has been rampant.

This distinction between living Christian theology and traditionalism is of the greatest importance. Just as a language that expresses a great civilisation is a great mental achievement, inspired by the Spirit, built up by the many, and greatly advanced by each genius who uses it, so is the theology of any honest religion; and of all religions the most intellectual, the most finely thought out, is Christianity; the classical Christian theology was the greatest of all the structural growths of human thought about God and man. But we must cease any longer to acquiesce in the teaching of Christianity as a dead language. It is as a dead language that the multitudes to-day have been taught the doctrine of the Resurrection. And because of this they have not learned the truth as it is in Christ about death, or at least have learned but a small portion of it.

Christ came to give us unbounded hope and confidence in the willingness of God to impart fresh truth. At the end of the first Christian age the most thoughtful of our Lord's followers interpreted His teaching thus:—

"Truly, truly, I tell you all, you shall see heaven open wide, and God's angels ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."[1]

"Truly, truly, I tell you, he who believes in me will

[1] John i. 51, Moffatt's trans.

do the very deeds I do, and still greater deeds than these. For I am going to the Father, and I will do whatever you ask in my name." [1]

"I have still much to say to you, but you cannot bear it just now. However, when the Spirit of Truth comes he will lead you all to the truth, for he will not speak of his own accord, he will say whatever he is told . . . he will draw upon what is mine and disclose it to you." [2]

In the Synoptic Gospels we see Jesus declaring in all the ways in which it is possible to speak that those who seek to understand have free access to the wisdom of heaven. "Ask, and it shall be given." The least in His Kingdom is said by Jesus to be greater than the greatest prophets of a former age. To His followers He says, "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have abundance." [3]

The first friends of Jesus bear witness to the spirit of wisdom and knowledge which they believe to be the gift of the risen Christ. Thus in Acts, St. Peter says to the chief priests, "We are his witnesses, and so is also the Holy Ghost whom God has given to them that obey him." [4] And St. Paul to the Corinthians says, "But the manifestation of the spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the spirit the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge by the same spirit." [5] In the benediction that ends 2 Peter believers are bidden to "grow in grace and in knowledge." St. Paul desires for the Philippians "that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment; so that ye may try the things that differ." [6] In the comparatively brief writings of the New Testament the number of

[1] John xiv. 12, Moffatt's trans.
[2] John xvi. 12-13, *Ibid.* [3] Matt. xiii. 11-12.
[4] Acts v. 32. [5] 1 Cor. xii. 7-8. [6] Philipp. i. 9-10.

passages in which the Spirit of Christ is associated with increasing knowledge and increasing understanding is so striking a feature that it is surprising that the vital connection between the possession of the Christian spirit and increasing knowledge ever became obscured or denied.

Again, if we are seeking, daily praying and knocking upon the door of heaven, for more abundant knowledge concerning the life after death, let us note that Jesus clearly said that truth can only be shown to "whosoever hath ears to hear." Are we listening—listening intently to Truth, who is always speaking in the "still small voice" of the mind?—to Truth, who is always speaking parables in the science of history and in the discoveries of science concerning all that world that lies open to our physical sense? Just as it is the province of science to find out what the facts of life are, to classify them and use them to verify or discredit whatever theory may have been advanced concerning them, so it is the province of a living theology to be constantly seeking from God the wit and wisdom that will interpret anew and more truly the parable of life.

We cannot do more here than give three illustrations of the way in which accepted Christian doctrines may be cross-examined in such a way that they may yield increasing help on the problem of the immortal life, taking as examples the doctrines of the Resurrection, the Invocation of Saints, and the Communion of Saints.

Christian theology has always insisted that on His Resurrection our Lord took His humanity into the next world. As we believe that on earth He lived manifesting the ideal humanity, we must believe that it was the ideal humanity that He manifested in His passage into the next world. Years after He had died St. Paul believed himself to see Him and speak to Him again and again. St. Paul was not alone in this: immediately after our Lord's death His closest friends

appear frequently to have seen Him and known Him. In the early Christian records we have very vivid pictures of such experiences. Nor have we any real reason to suppose that this power in Jesus Christ to make Himself known to men on earth in any way diminished as time passed on earth. All down the centuries certain faithful souls have given witness to the same sort of experience, and notably in the foreign mission-field to-day it is possible to find innumerable humble workers with whom awareness of their Lord's presence and inward conversation with Him is a vivid and common experience. We may, if we will, believe that the communion Jesus held with His followers after His death was telepathic, but that the strength of His spirit and His love were such that He could give clearer and stronger impressions of His presence than other spirits can; or we may, if we please, believe that all spirits in the next world clothe themselves in some ethereal form, and that He had the power to make this form manifest while faith was very weak; but the truth we must perceive to be essential is that this power to make Himself known and to re-create the flagging spirits of His friends is associated with the unique moral and spiritual achievement of His life; which suggests that the men and women who come nearest to the moral and spiritual level of His life here will be those who have most power in the beyond to touch and help the friends they have left and all who in all times are working for the reign of God.

The author of the Fourth Gospel reports His Master as saying just before His death to His disciples: "Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know . . . I am the Way." This strongly suggests that the way in which in the after-life He lived in ever closer fellowship with His followers on earth has a bearing on the problem of our own passing into the next life, on the conditions in which we shall exist there, and upon what sort of conduct here will enhance our future powers of

living in communion with our friends on earth. The outstanding idea we seem to gather from our Lord's example and teaching is that the better and nobler the life here the more closely it will be associated with the helping of humanity after death. The assumption of Oriental speculation that the reverse is the case is founded upon belief in the inherent evil of matter, and the consequent belief that time and progress must free the spirit more and more from association with it. But Christian experience is like the sunshine of spring, which glorifies all matter, causing it to break forth into bloom and song ; and it teaches that the higher and stronger the flight of a human spirit into the heavens, the more it is able to return upon the rays of divine light and bless the earth.

In the practice of the Invocation of Saints Christian consciousness has witnessed to the belief that they who have attained some special degree of grace upon earth are able in the after-life to hear the prayers of the living and to give them wisdom and aid. Where we think this doctrine has become artificial and unconvincing is in the assumption that any earthly organisation has the insight to decide who are or are not the best men and women, together with the assumption that God is such that we need them as mediators of our prayers to Him. We find that canonisation has often been decided by a standard of values which we cannot, in this age of the world, acknowledge. It is not that many of these canonised saints have not lived most nobly, but that we are sure that hundreds of men and women, whose lives have made little appeal to the admiration of the official Church, have lived as nobly and in as close communion with God. If the power to return and bless the earth, and cheer and elevate children and children's children, is the reward of moral achievement, these also must have won the power. Just as all who live nobly on earth in manifesting their truth and love to us manifest God, so any of these who

have passed beyond the reach of our senses may touch our souls and manifest God to us in other ways. We all know Browning's verses entitled "Apparitions," in which beauty is revealed to him in a flower, hope in a star, and God in a human face. Such apparitions of beauty on earth are of Heaven, and the beauty that may come to us in the silent experience of the soul by the touch of some noble discarnate spirit will be also of God. Such unseen "apparitions" as are the manifestation of God in the medium through which He chooses to appear bear no relation to those unhappy "ghosts" that are supposed to haunt certain localities or certain people, and as a fact engender only moods of fear and curiosity. Our reasons for doubting whether these bear evidence to the presence of discarnate spirits have been already given.[1]

Let us now consider what fresh light on our problem the doctrine of "the Communion of Saints" may yield.

In an essay in *Concerning Prayer*[2] I have endeavoured to show that because salvation for humanity must be a social salvation, the communion of saints, or the ties which bind together human society in the next life and in this, ought to be realised in our thoughts and in our prayers. We must reflect that fellowship is of the very essence of Christianity, and we cannot perfectly realise fellowship with the living if we do not regard friendship as something stronger than death, something unimpaired by death. It is true of every spiritual or social development that it takes its tone and standard from the end in view, and if we look forward to the truncating of any friendship by death, or to its sudden vapouring off into something inconceivable, its whole standard will be lower, much lower, than if we realise the meaning of the communion of souls in this life and the next. This will also be true of our wider social friendships. How different would be our service to the cause of "the poor," "the drunkard,"

[1] Essay VII. p. 278.

[2] Essay on "Prayer for the Dead."

"the prostitute," or "the party politician," if we realised the certainty of meeting each now unknown person benefited or injured by our efforts, and discussing our motives and methods with them in a future life in which all concealment had become impossible, and in which their welfare and ours were plainly interdependent. It is not left to us to choose whether our salvation shall be social or not; we are born into a bond far closer than that of earthly kindred—a telepathic bond including every other human soul. Their thoughts, their feelings, their acts of will, are woven into the mental atmosphere in which we live, whether we will or no. We inherit our very thoughts and feelings from all past generations; the knowledge that they have accumulated is the very breath of our minds; and if man is immortal, as we believe, they all await us in another world, where, if such evidence as we now have of telepathy be any promise for the future,[1] our connection with them will be far closer than it is now, so that our fate will be still more closely bound up with theirs. It therefore not only behoves us to desire to know more concerning the social nature of our salvation both here and hereafter, but to pray for the welfare of those who have passed into the unseen as we pray for our own.

Along similar lines other of the tenets of Christian theology might, if interrogated, help us to a clearer knowledge of the after-life. They are rich in truths that lie undeveloped, and the work of many minds is needed for their development. In late centuries the Church has been all too remiss. A contemporary writer observes:

"The conception of immortality brought to light in the Gospel . . . such a reinforcement, and enrichment, and intensity of life beyond the grave as no language can describe, no imagination picture forth . . . was the 'hope of glory,' begun in foretaste here. . . . Not mere continuance of such a life, even at its best, as we

[1] Cf. Essay III. p. 110.

now enjoy; but a full realisation of what comes to us here only in inspired moments, in ecstatic foreshadowings, in dreams and visions of the soul. . . . The Resurrection Life of Jesus was the morning-star of this glorious day. This it was that set the seal on his promise that where he was they should be also, and filled them all with such confidence. . . . It is strange, but true, that the Christian Church has only realised at rare intervals in its long history the splendour of this vision, and has lived under its inspiration only by fits and starts."[1]

We must hope and pray that our modern theologians may take heart of grace and help the questioning world.

Reinterpretation of Experience

Theology deals chiefly with the religious experience of the past, and the interpretation that great thinkers give to that experience; but we have also our own present experience to interrogate.

Let us, then, candidly ask whether this life is really in our experience as much cut off from the next as we are apt to believe.

It is quite possible that we have made an entire mistake in supposing that the souls of our dead friends are cut off from us. When a soul develops the God consciousness it finds God continually within and without; communion with God becomes a constant and familiar reality. It is not to be imagined that God was not with such a soul before, as well as after, its awakening. Just so, it is at least possible that our souls may have communion with the discarnate souls of those they have loved on earth, but may be unaware of the fact, for we overlook many things in our lives till we obtain some new light upon their nature and importance.

I would like to illustrate what I mean by tran-

[1] *Faith and Immortality*, by Dr. E. Griffith-Jones, pp. 305-307.

scribing what I believe to embody a true experience. It is a colloquy between a widow and a modern vicar. The latter, having lost his only daughter at the same time as his son was killed in the war, had been plunged into depression and had received great comfort from visiting a medium through whose lips he believed he had caught characteristic messages from his children. In paying a visit he spoke of this in confidence to the widow, saying at the same time how inadequate he had found the ordinary consolations of religion.

"Well," said she, "when I was young I lost my husband. I was mad with grief. He was all the world to me, and I was a silly little thing without much religion and with almost no faith; and I had the children to bring up, and no one to help me. I just raged against God for taking my James from me. So when the parson came I raged at him for calling a God like that good. All he said was, 'I don't know whether your husband's death was God's will or not. It may have happened because of the sinful condition of the world; but of one thing I am quite sure, and that is that it is God's will to be your Comforter.'"

"Yes," said the vicar, "we all say that, but comfort sometimes comes through indirect channels, and I think that in Spiritualism God may be guiding us to find such a channel. Did you find the comfort of which he spoke?"

"I will tell you what happened if you care to know," said the widow. "I didn't believe I should get comfort his way. I was angry at heart, but I was honest. I asked the parson how God could comfort me, and he said that God could be to me all that my husband had been, and more. I was so angry that I got in the way of defying God in my heart. A dozen times a day, when I wanted my husband, I would say to God, 'Now and here, this is what I need, and you can't give it to me.' Perhaps it would be advice I wanted; perhaps I wanted to show my husband how bonny the children

were ; perhaps I wanted to tell him of the clever things they said ; or perhaps I was tired and wanted a hand to help. I thought this was a wicked habit of mine, telling God that He couldn't meet my needs. But after a while I came somehow to feel that God liked the honesty of it. Sometimes I seemed to think quite suddenly and unexpectedly of the Lord Christ looking at me with a twinkle in His eye"—she paused for a few moments. "It was just wonderful how, some way or other, after a few months the world was all full of God for me. I was very young and foolish, and I am none too wise now, but I have known a secret since that time that I can't put into words. But what I was going to tell you when I began was something else. It was one day a year after my husband died, and I went out with God into the garden to get some flowers to put on his grave, and there, suddenly, I knew that my husband himself was there with me in the garden—just himself, only braver and stronger and more happy than I had ever known him."

"Did you see anything?" asked the vicar.

"Oh no. I thank God I have always kept my five wits about me. If the sort of form he had were the kind my eyes could see, of course I should see him all the time, and not occasionally standing about like a silly ghost."

"Did you hear anything?" enquired the vicar.

"No, I didn't. How could I hear what I couldn't see?"

"How did you know that he was there?" asked the vicar.

"I don't know how I knew—but I knew ; and times and times since I have known ; and if you want any proof that what I tell you is true, I should say, Apply the old test—look for the fruits! Look at my children. Do you think the foolish undisciplined girl that I was could have trained and taught them as they have been trained and taught? What I think is that

whatever comfort you got through your medium, I got a better form of comfort, for I found God and my husband too."

Afterwards, in speaking about it, the vicar remarked that she was evidently an unusual woman, spiritually minded, healthy and intelligent; but he added that he also thought she had a lively imagination, and he questioned the veridical nature of her experiences. As for me, I question the veridical nature of his; I do not find his evidence at all convincing.

The Goal of Existence

We have seen that in our knocking at the door of knowledge concerning the life after death we must seek to enter into the past of Christian experience and its interpretation, and that we must also seek to enter with more intelligence and patience into the present experience of the inner life. Lastly, it is evident that whatever we may learn about the goal of our existence must throw light upon our relations here and hereafter, and the relation between the here and hereafter.

There are two distinct conceptions of the ultimate future of man; the one seems to be founded upon the ecstasy of mystic vision, the other upon the experience of the excellence of fellowship or friendship. In the one conception high Heaven is a rapture in which all particulars are fused into the Infinite: in the other the Heavenly state is social, emphasising personal distinctions. Let us consider these two ideals in more detail.

The irradiation of the inner vision when the soul first becomes conscious of God is an experience in comparison with which all other aspects of life seem partial and poor. When a man is not brought up in the God-consciousness—which a child ought to share with its mother from the dawn of life—the first hour of his consciousness of God is often ecstatic. In it

the power of thought fails; hence all distinctions are blurred, and the new experience of self-devotion or self-forgetfulness which the thought of God evokes is confused with the loss of all outline, all character, all individuality, in the sense of infinitude.[1] This failure of the power of thought in times of great emotion is a consequence of our insufficiency. We are, as yet, too weak, too undeveloped, to feel greatly and to think clearly at the same time. One transcendent idea produces a state of mental rest, necessary to our feebleness, since the rhythm of our immature lives is as yet slow.[2]

But because this is our beginning in the apprehension of God, it is a mistake to suppose it to be the goal. This mistake arises from our confusion of God —whom we dimly perceive, and the clear apprehension of whom is our goal—with the effect upon our weakness of perceiving Him. God is the beauty from which all beauty comes, the truth in which all truth centres. He imparts the health, the mirth, the energy of life, because these are His attributes. He is also the personality in whose love our personal characters become worthy. Thus, when we first become personally aware of His beauty and delightfulness, thought fails; nor are we conscious of volition, but only of being attracted and of His attraction. But this incapacity of ours to think clearly, to will strongly, while we feel intense attraction, is not the supreme good. God is the supreme good, not the failure of thought and will in our undeveloped nature which is so often involved in our glimpses of Him. Yet some mystics, in all ages, have mistaken the failure of thought and will, in contemplation, for the highest good, because they have confused the perfection of that which is adorable with the imperfection of the adoration. They have sought to return again and again to the beginning, mistaking it for the goal. They have sought, consciously or unconsciously, to acquire a habit of this

[1] Cf. Essay II. p. 38. [2] Cf. Essay VIII. pp. 329-330.

fainting of reason and will before the vision of God. They have sought to conceive of the abeyance of thought and will as eternal. Strong natures who have made this mistake have held other strong beliefs about God which are not compatible with it. They did not see the incompatibility, and by their conscious communion with God their personalities became lusty, their individuality clearly defined, their activities widespread and beneficent. These were the great mystics, and while they speak of the immortal life in phrases which suggest absorption into God, they do not teach either the future annihilation of the self or the intolerable emptiness of an existence that approaches the Nirvana of the Orientals. But to weaker natures the mistake of believing contemplation which has no intellectual content[1] to be the goal of the religious life, is fatal; and under the delusion we see men and women whose wills become weaker, whose thoughts become more and more shallow, whose virtues are largely negative, and whose prayers seem ineffectual. Their lives, on the whole—judged by any liberal standard of human responsibility in face of the world's need—are less worthy than the average life of men and women who have declared that they have no consciousness of such a God as this worship indicates, and no desire to participate in the worship.

Again, the belief that we at our highest fall back into God, as a planet might fall back into the sun and become indistinguishable from the sun, is fostered by our natural inability to reconcile the finite and infinite or time and eternity. We cannot think of God as personal and as infinite at the same time; we cannot think of Him as the All, embracing both good and evil, and at the same time think of Him as the Good. Argument is useless here, because we are on the bedrock of things that underlie all argument. By sophistication we may indeed argue any of our natural certainties

[1] Cf. Essay VIII. pp. 331-332.

out of consciousness, but they come back to us when we consult truth in simplicity and silence. Our hearts tell us that God is personal; if we know Him we know that He is our Friend: our reason tells us that God is infinite: our own power to will tells us that God, too, makes choice between good and evil—that He chooses good and not evil. All these truths come to us as the voice of God in the soul. Dispute them for a time we may, but they return upon us in the first uprush from the depth of that part of our mind lying below consciousness. Argue as we will, sophisticate ourselves as we will, degrade ourselves as we will, yet in the first quiet hour when we listen to the voice of truth in our souls we know that evil exists, and that God is good and not evil. Now, because, in our immaturity, we cannot reconcile God's personality and goodness with His infinitude, it is pure folly to think that a return to homogeneity—the mere disappearance of the particular, the individual, the personal—would vindicate the divine infinitude and give us the unity we desire. To bring the finite to an end is not to reconcile it with the infinite, any more than setting a term to time can reconcile it with eternity. For we, and all things, exist in God's infinitude now; our individuality battens within it; our personality grows strong because of it; and we know, if we know anything, that while the more we approach the good the more we please God, at the same time the more men approach the good the more nobly distinctive, the more beautifully individual, do their characters become. To imagine, then, that at the end of this life we shall cease to exist as conscious beings, that our characters, our personalities, will fall back into some boundless being, instead of becoming more and more definite, more and more individual, is certainly not to exalt God; for it is founded on the belief, either that God is now belittled by our present individuality, or that our present individuality is a mere delusion. In the latter case God,

whom we find in the depths of our souls, is doubtless also a delusion, for if the self is not real it is no respectable witness on whose testimony we can accept God. Our deepest mature conviction is that finite and infinite interpenetrate, as time and eternity interpenetrate, and our problems must be solved in the light of that conviction.

Yet our minds are so made that they must find unity. The question we are discussing is, how may we realise unity? The highest unity of which experience teaches us is a society of highly developed personalities, clearly defined characters, who are loyally united to one another in love and in purposeful activity for some great end. That was our Lord's conception of the kingdom of God: that, at its highest, has always been the ideal of Christians for the Church.

To suppose that in the ultimate heaven a higher unity can be found by the extinction of individuality and personality, venerable as the speculation is, seems to imply the confusion of thought which we have just been seeking to analyse. I have suggested that this idea is engendered by the way in which our will and reason seem to faint and fail in contemplation of God's goodness or beauty, and is fostered by our partial or abstract ways of thought which create the problem of the finite and infinite. We know certainly that unless in this life our nature quickly rights itself from the failure of reason and will in adoration, we shall fail to live nobly. Experience, too, teaches us that, as we grow in understanding of and likeness to God, the attitude of worship becomes more and more compatible with clear thought and strong volition.

The better thing, then—in sight for us even now—is an increased vitality, in which all the powers of our nature can work together in perfect and restful harmony, so that we may be able, while we adore beauty, to grasp the perfection of separate beauties; while we contemplate personality, to perceive the necessity for distinct persons;

while we worship truth, to be able to rejoice in the recognition of separate truths. At perfect rest in the harmony of life, we ought to be able to choose with strong will between the better and the worse—the will strengthened, not weakened, by our consciousness of the infinite Good. As a matter of fact, simple natures who in quiet ways move on instinctively from strength to strength of love and activity and common sense, do attain to this harmony of powers "without observation," and find no difficulty in the Christian faith of personal immortality and an endless, conscious, and ever ennobling fellowship with all men and friendship with the God in whom now they live and move and have their being.

But the opposing conception—that the energies of the self must pass away in the ecstasy of the Divine Vision—has had a far-reaching, and in my view baneful, influence. Largely through it the Christian hope of immortality has been emptied of content. It is not Christian; it came into the Church from Oriental and neo-Platonic sources. The greatest minds of the Church have never proclaimed it; but it has been held by certain sections of Christians all down the centuries, and their words and experiences still influence many minds both Christian and non-Christian. The idea that it is noble to give up "individual desire," to become "impersonal," to cease from wanting an individual immortality, is quite common now, and was originally due to the mystics who in the religious life set ecstasy above the joy of friendship.

If, on the other hand, we accept the ideal of friendship as the perfect unity we must realise that it implies distinction of selves. Love is an attribute which only exists in a person and in relation to other persons. Love always desires that its object should become more of a person—more individual, of stronger and more defined character. That, indeed, is the meaning of the parable of biological evolution. It is the progress from what is all alike, all the same, all one, all absorbed

in an infinite sameness or principle of being, to what is definite, the most distinctive form of individuality—the person, compact of thought, feeling, and volition, all dominated by and reflecting the personal outlook. Can God love an amoeba? Yet a thousand times sooner can Love greet the amoeba for the promise of individuality it enfolds than feel attraction for the homogeneity out of which it springs.

Here on earth the human soul begins by being separated from all else, a self; and by degrees attains to greater and greater differentiation. Can we believe that in another life its progress will be by returning to selflessness?

Again, we do not get co-operation, much less unity, by selflessness here. The men whom we call nonentities, the women whose desires and wills have been suppressed until impulse and volition have atrophied—these do not long hang together in any enterprise. They need to be driven like sheep, and then their movements are never harmonious but merely similar. Loyalty to the unity of any friendship, private or corporate, requires strength and distinction of character.

We have, then, two rays of light illuminating the highest paradise we can conceive. They are like searchlights from the lanterns of earthly truth, and we see their long, slender pencils traversing the unknown heaven. The one affirms that if the ultimate unity is the perfect friendship of all living selves with each other and with God, each individual soul living for this high destiny must become ever more clearly outlined in distinctive personal beauty. The other affirms that if the progress of the soul is from selflessness to clearer and clearer definition of personal distinction, the ultimate unity of all in all must be the perfect friendship. So they meet in the zenith.

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